

FOREIGN
DISSERTATION

8710

Bern

ROBERT PEARSE GILLIES

AND THE PROPAGATION
OF GERMAN LITERATURE IN ENGLAND
AT THE END OF THE XVIIITH AND THE
BEGINNING OF THE XIXTH CENTURY

UC-NRLF



B 2 604 599



Gisard

UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA LIBRARY

BERN — BUCHDRUCKEREI RÖSCH & SCHATZMANN — 1916

FD
8710

B2 604599

ROBERT PEARSE GILLIES

AND THE PROPAGATION
OF GERMAN LITERATURE IN ENGLAND
AT THE END OF THE XVIIITH AND THE
BEGINNING OF THE XIXTH CENTURY.

Inaugural-Dissertation

zur

Erlangung der Doktorwürde

eingereicht bei der

Philosophischen Fakultät
der Universität Bern

von

Paul Girardin

aus

Les Bois.



Von der philosophischen Fakultät auf Antrag des Herrn
Prof. Müller-Hess angenommen.

Bern, den 15. Juli 1914.

Der Dekan:

Prof. ED. FISCHER.

I. THE LITERARY CIRCLE OF EDINBURGH AT THE END OF THE XVIIITH CENTURY.

„Modern Athens“ is the name which Gillies uses in his „Memoirs“ for designating Edinburgh, the Edinburgh of the end of the XVIIIth century, with regard to its importance for the literature of England in that period.

Edinburgh and its literary circles can however in no way be compared to the great Greek town in its influence on art and literature altogether, and „Modern Athens“ is therefore only to be taken „cum grano salis“. It is no Paris of Lewis XIV. no Berlin of Frederic the Great, it is no Weimar of the times of our German classics, it's no Munich or Vienna. Had it not been for Walter Scott the Edinburgh of the end of the eighteenth century would hardly be mentioned in the history of universal literature.

But nevertheless it is worth to be studied thoroughly and in a more detailed way than it has been done before. A great number of literary men at that time lived there in literary intercourse, trying to find new paths for literature, trying, as Gillies says, to leave „the beaten track“. They were full of new ideas, full of schemes and may in many things be compared to the so called „Romantic School“ in Germany.

At that time in Edinburgh, everything was favourable for strengthening the circles of those „literati“. It was easy for them to come before the public, having in the „Edinburgh Review“ and in „Blackwood's Magazine“ ¹⁾ mouth pieces for their ideas. And moreover, two first rate publishing houses, Constable and Ballantyne, paid high prizes for any work that had the least hope for success. The sums which Scott received for his works are too well known to be repeated. But it is interesting to hear that also literary aspirants of minor importance, as for instance James Hogg, the „Ettrick Shepherd“, received considerable sums of money for works, about which they themselves did not think much and of which they confessed to have written them for money's

¹⁾ „Another literary review of that time, highly estimated by Gillies, is the „Censuria literaria“ of Sir Egerton Brydges.

sake only. So Gillies quotes as an example a three volumes novel of Hogg's, badly written as all of Hogg's prose, for which the author nevertheless received 600 £. Edinburgh's fame for being a good business town for authors even reached far off countries: It is rather interesting to hear, that the Danish poet Oehlenschläger hastily wrote a novel, sending it to Gillies to have it translated into English and to have it published in Edinburgh, which Gillies refused to do, being a better poet than a business man and thinking that work of the „Danish Shakespeare“ very much inferior to everything the poet had written before.¹⁾

But it would be wrong to believe that money-making was the chief stimulus for literary work. Though we find at Edinburgh at that time a great many professional writers, who made their living by writing, we also find a great number of members of the high society of Scotland also devoted to literary pursuits, which always received new impulse by sociable meetings of every kind.

As most of the representants of that literary society in Edinburgh are entirely forgotten to-day and not mentioned in even voluminous works about the history of literature, I shall try to recall a few of those names. Posterity often is unjust towards men whose talents are put into shade by first rate talents, and in admiring our great geniï we forget entirely how much they owe to their whole surroundings, to the persons with whom they had daily intercourse, to the friends with whom they could speak about everything which was yet unclear to their mind.

At that time there lived in Edinburgh „the most thorough bred and indubitable original whom it was possible to meet in all Scotland“. This is *James Hogg, the Ettrick Shepherd*. His career may be compared to that of Burns, but is still more astonishing. Gillies (whom I am following in giving this short sketch about the life of the Ettrick shepherd) says, that up to the age of twenty Hogg, could scarcely read the Bible. At that period of his life also he first taught himself to write. He did it in copying with great difficulty from printed books.

In driving a herd of cattle from Ettrick to Edinburgh he conceived the plan of getting a volume into print. He had no writing materials with him; but on his walks he tried to remember the

¹⁾ Gillies III. 85.

²⁾ Gillies II. 117 ff.

verses and then ran into a shop for pen and paper and quickly put them down. When he had enough copy he found a printer and an octavo volume was published, which he had written in a week.

Walter Scott, at first, did not believe in his genius and gave Hogg the advice rather than to write poetry to put down his knowledge of sheepfarming. Hogg took up the plan, but nothing came of it.

Then he suddenly appeared in Edinburgh, where with the help of a few humble friends he published a volume of poetry, the „Forest-Minstrel“.

A short time afterwards, to the greatest amazement of everybody, Hogg appeared as the publisher of a weekly paper, entitled „the Spy“, containing articles about the customs and manners of Edinburgh, its tastes and doings, interwoven with poems and stories, all of which were original productions of Hogg. He kept the paper up for more than a year. Gillies remarks about it:

„A new weekly journal to be penned exclusively by one „and the same hand would have been a stout undertaking for „any literary man; it was altogether marvellous on the part of „a lonely illiterate shepherd.“¹⁾

The revenues of Hogg were still so small that he had to live in a tenanted room in one of the suburbs. But the quietness in which he lived there and to which he was accustomed from the country was favourable for his productive power. It was there that in an incredibly short time he composed his „Queen's Wake“, which „carried on“ its author. Hogg himself felt that power in him which, once awaken, kept his productive power lively and made him write poetry at which he himself wondered as much as his friends.

Gillies remembers, what Hogg used to tell him, when they talked about these things:

„A ye, ye're a learned man, there's nae doubt about that, „wi' your Virgils and Homers and Dantés and Petrarchs. But „aiblins ye mind yon fragment upon the slate that ye despised „t'ither morning. Eh man, sin syne, it's ettling to turn ont the „vera best thing I ever composed; and that's no saying little, „ye ken!“

„Queen's Wake“, also a collection of ballads, had a great success on account of its freshness of thoughts and its originality which at this time was still more remarkable, as every production of that kind

¹⁾ Gillies I. 121.

then easily was to be traced back to its source: Scott or Byron. At once Hogg was „lifted up to an entirely new and unexpected grade on the Scottish Parnassus“. ¹⁾

It was in 1814 that, from a scrap book which he saw on Gillies' table, Hogg conceived the plan of making a kind of anthology of modern poetry. For that purpose he asked a poem from each then living poet and a great number of them promised their assistance. So Wordsworth, Byron who often sent him long letters, Scott, Southey, Wilson and others. But only Wordsworth kept his promise and as this poem could not well be published alone, he added it to the next edition of his „Queen's Wake“.

It would not at all have been according to Hogg's character, if he had given up his plan. As the poets had failed to keep their promise, Hogg himself set down to write, trying to imitate a great many of the contemporaries. So the „Guerilla Chief“ in Spenserian Stanza's was written for Byron. Other ballads and poems were written in Southey's, Scott's, Wordsworth's style and the whole collection was published under the title of „Poetic Mirror“ by John Ballantyne who was delighted by this literary joke. The success of the volume was a full one, also from the financial point of view.

One of the kindest patrons of the Ettrick Shepherd was the Duke of Buccleugh. To provide for his favourite he had given him a farm for lease, rent free. And so our poet removed from Edinburgh to Altrive Lake, in Ettrick, near St. Mary's Loch.

Hogg hoped to find there the necessary quietness for working, being far away from town and quite out of reach of the society he had frequented in Edinburgh. But he was mistaken. There was hardly a day without guests and as the next town was very far off and could only be reached after a long walk, the guests stayed over night, doing proper honour to his „Whisky-toddy“.

As this kind of life not only left him no time for literary work but also was too expensive for his small income, Hogg was obliged to give up Altrive Lake and to go to Edinburgh again, where he took refuge in the house of one of his friends. It was Gillies who had introduced the Shepherd into fashionable society, great favourite of which the poet soon became. That second stay in Edinburgh was one of the happiest periods in the poet's life.

¹⁾ Gillies I, 122.

²⁾ Gillies II, 238.

Among Hogg's later poetical productions may be mentioned „Mador of the Moor“, the „Pilgrims of the Sun“, Queen Hynde“, „Dramatic Tales“.

His prose was not very good. Nevertheless he also wrote a great deal in prose, as „Shepherd's Calendar“, „Brownie of Bodsbeck“, „Three Perils of Man“, „Three Perils of Women“, and „Jacobite Relics“.

Besides that he contributed numerous poems, ballads and prose articles to Magazines, especially to Blackwood's.

Gillies believes, that the appearance of Hogg brought a new tone into the literary circles of Edinburgh. Whilst Pinkerton and others always maintained that book learning was necessary for any one who afterwards himself wanted to write, Hogg with great pertinacity refused any book, which in his eyes was the only way to be kept free from imitation and plagiarism. In his eyes the chief thing in poetry was originality. And that he himself had in greatest measure.

I am quoting Gillies who says the following about Hogg's importance for the Edinburgh literati:

„I am thoroughly convinced, that his example gave a new impulse to literature. There were individuals who, observing with wonder the facility and pertinacity with which he composed and the undeniable merit of his productions, became ashamed that, with all their book knowledge they should allow themselves to be outdone and cast utterly into shade by an illiterate shepherd In truth, after his appearance the number of aspirant authors increased wonderfully; and as Hogg insisted, that no one deserved the name of poet, whose writings were not perfectly original, so every such aspirant began very resolutely to aim at somewhat entirely new in matter and, if possible, in form. Hogg all the while went his own way, perfectly unconscious and regardless of the influence which he exercised . . . Amongst other effects of his excentric example, I may notice, that but for his suggestions, although he never in his life could write a page of prose that was fit to be read, Blackwood's far-famed Magazine would probably not have come into existence“.

Among the literati crowded around Blackwood we at that time also find³⁾ *John Galt* (1779—1839) whom I range just after Hogg,

¹⁾ Gillies II. 244.

²⁾ Gillies II. 133 ff.

³⁾ Gillies III. 57 ff.

because he also had not at all been educated for literature.¹⁾ His father was a captain in the West-India trade and he himself became a custom officer, but after a short time took to literature and distinguished himself as a clever journalist. By a sort of original „naïveté“ he became very popular which led him to write too much. He was proud of his facility in writing and did not care how these productions of his pen were. Gillies once remonstrated against that, to which Galt answered:

„Where's the harm? — It answers a temporary purpose, „both of author and publisher!“

Galt was also financially very successful, so that he earnestly planned to build a kind of stronghold or fortress on the sea-shore, which should be his future abode. It should be built on a high cliff, overlooking the sea and giving its inhabitants the opportunity of watching the storm and the surf rolling against the shore. All the minor details of the household there were planned, even to the wine in the cellar and the friends who would be invited to visit the poet. A small property on the sea-shore was actually bought, when suddenly his friends were overtaken by the news, that he had got a government appointment in Canada, to which he soon afterwards removed.

The end of Galt's life is rather a sad one. In Canada he quarrelled with the authorities, came back to London to set things right and got imprisoned for debts. Even during a long confinement he continued to be active in literature, dictating, when his broken down health no longer permitted him to write. He died in Greenock at the age of sixty.

Among his publications may be mentioned the „Ayrshire Legatees“, „Laurie Todd“, in 3 volumes, „The Annals of the Parish“ and „The Entail“, the last two novels being considered to be his best. — He also has written an autobiography.

His principal strength lies, as Körting²⁾ remarks, in the delineating of Scottish manners and customs, which in his novels always is better than his plot.

Dr. William Tennent may be mentioned together with Hogg and Galt, for he too was an autodidact. He was schoolmaster at Lasswade at the time when Gillies resided there in his cottage. His notions about literary work were entirely contrary to those of Hogg. He

¹⁾ Gosse and Garnett, IV. 183.

²⁾ Körting, Geschichte der engl. Literatur, pag. 367, Anmerkung 1.

thought book learning absolutely necessary for any poet and despised the kind of literary work as Hogg did it¹⁾, „insisting that such work was no better than twisting ropes of sand, a building without a foundation“. Though he was lame and could not move without crutches, he rose summer and winter at five o'clock in the morning to have time for his own studies before beginning his daily schoolwork. He was especially interested in oriental languages and taught himself Hebrew, Sanskrit and Persian. He had an astonishing energy for his work and never complained of anything but of lack of time.

Hogg and others did not like him, especially on account of the „schoolmasterly“ way in which he treated everybody. He willingly taught everybody but could not bear to be taught himself. The first work with which he came before the public was „Anster Fair“, which is based on the Italian humorists.

Tennent afterwards removed to the college of Dollar.

An occasional member of the Lasswade-colony of literati of that time was also *Patrick Fraser Tytler*.²⁾ He had great facility in writing poetry, but looking only with disdain on that kind of work he soon turned entirely to historical researches, going back to the oldest authentic documents he could find and studying with unremitting energy the archives of the government, trying to bring forth documents, which were hardly suspected to exist.

His „History of the reign of Edward VI.“¹⁾ made quite a sensation, on account of its unexpected revelations, by which many were scandalised, especially of course the government party. The result was, that the legislature closed the archives of the Record Office against literary men, especially against Tytler!

One of Gillies' sonnets is addressed to the „Bard of Wootton“, *Sir Egerton Brydges*:³⁾ „To a favourite author“, wherein Gillies pays high tribute to the poetic power of Sir Egerton.

Sir Egerton Brydges removed afterwards to Lee Priory where he settled after a long journey on the continent and it was there that Gillies met him again, coming from London.

Sir Egerton belonged like Scott to a noble family, but also had given himself up to literary pursuits, important especially in his literary criticism. Scott⁴⁾ had a great regard for him.

¹⁾ Gillies III. 63.

²⁾ Gillies III. 65 ff.

³⁾ Gillies II. 5., III. 191 ff.

⁴⁾ Gillies, Recollections, p. 284.

The great financial crisis was not without influence on Sir Egerton's life. In the management of his estates he had been wronged by rapacious men of business and law and so got into financial troubles.

He lived in frequent intercourse with the Edinburgh literary circles and distinguished himself also in politics, for several years representing Maidstone in Parliament.

He later on returned to the continent. — After literary criticism his chief works are his novels.

About *Sir Brooke Boothby*,²⁾ at that period also living in Edinburgh, Gillies remembers the following remark of Walter Scott:³⁾

„What he (Sir Brooke Boothby) has published in the poetical „department is of a very different character, distinguished rather „by simplicity and good taste. Had not Sir Brooke, in his younger „years, been too much of a fine gentleman to give himself much „trouble about book-making, he might, probably, have risen to „considerable eminence as an author.“

Sir Brooke Boothby was a man of the world. He had in his early years travelled a great deal on the continent, where he had made the acquaintance of Rousseau, enjoying the poet's „Nouvelle Héloïse“ on the banks of the lake of Geneva.

On his return to England he took to politics and became acquainted with the leading personages of the liberal party in England. He continued a regular correspondence with Lord Nelson.

On a second tour on the continent Sir Brooke went to Germany, residing at several German courts, longest of all at Weimar. Goethe still remembered him, when twenty six years later Gillies came to pay him a visit and introduced Sir Brooke as a topic of conversation. „I saw more of him than of any other English resident and regretted his departure the most“, said Goethe.⁴⁾

Goethe also remembered, that Sir Brooke had taken a commission in the Duke's cavalry in order to be permitted to appear at court in boots, instead of silk stockings, which he greatly disliked.

It was from Weimar that Sir Brooke Boothby had taken some curious habits, which made him quite unpopular when he finally settled down at Edinburgh, retiring entirely from social life. He rose summer and winter between four and five, took breakfast at this early

¹⁾ Gillies II. 37.

²⁾ Gillies I. c. II. 35 ff.

³⁾ Recoll. p. 163.

⁴⁾ Gillies III. 15.

hour, went to his literary work which he finished at two, his dinner time. In the afternoon he took himself to his water-colour drawings and retired to rest at eight or nine already. He was therefore thought to be excentric, especially as he avoided society whenever he could.

Gillies met him occasionally and brought him together with Walter Scott whose rising fame Sir Brooke had followed with the greatest interest.

It was not till 1814 that Sir Brooke became acquainted with Wordsworth, for whose genius he had no appreciation at all. He thought the subjects of his poetry ill chosen, his poems themselves often childish. And when Gillies warmly defended his friend Wordsworth, Sir Brooke sent him, a few days after their conversation, a travesty of Wordsworth's poems, entitled: „Second childhood, or, Exercises of a Neophyte in the New School“, at which Wordsworth most heartily laughed, when he saw it a few years later in Gillies' house.

Among his works may be mentioned „Sorrows sacred to the Memory of Penelope“ and two volumes of metrical fables, published at Edinburgh. He also was working on a new translation of Horace and wrote a great deal of detached poetry, among which Gillies mentions a poem addressed to him.

From his stay at Weimar Sir Brooke kept a certain predilection for German literature. He always had with him an edition of Werther and different German books. He also had made several translations, of which the one of the „Genius and the Bajadere“ was published in the „Edinburgh Annual Register“, at the suggestion of Gillies.

An intimate friend of Walter Scott's was *William Erskine*,¹⁾ well known in the literary circles of Edinburgh. Though his character was different from that of the noble poet, Scott delighted in Erskine's society and often had him for weeks as a guest at Abbotsford. Lockhart gives us a good picture of Erskine.

He lived a very quiet and retired life, was rather unsociable and had many enemies to whose intrigues Scott attributed the fact, that Erskine had to wait for so many years till he was promoted to a higher position. He was first promoted to the Sheriffship of Orkney and then, probably through the intervention of Scott, to one of the regular Lords of Session, receiving at the same time the title of Lord Kinnedder. He enjoyed his new rank only for a very short time. In

¹⁾ Gillies, *Memoirs*, II. 13 ff. 44. 128. — Lockhart: „*Life of Walter Scott.*“ pag. 281, 288 f., 357, 496 ff, 523 f.

the autumn of 1822 he fell ill. A „silly calumny“, which the sensitive man only too much took to heart helped to make matters worse, and amidst of the noisy festivities during the visit of George IV. in Edinburgh, Lord Kinnedder died, deeply lamented by all those who had known him more intimately, especially by Scott, whose letters of that period are filled with remarks about the great loss he had just undergone.

Erskine is more of a literary critic than of a poet. Nevertheless his poetical abilities must have been known at Edinburgh. When Scott published his „Rokeby“ he at the same time published its literary twin, „The Bridal of Triermain“, which by earnest critics was attributed to Erskine, who at Scott's request, acted for a short time his part as author of „Triermain“ pretty well.

For Scott Erskine was the kind friend and literary adviser. Lockhart tells us,²⁾ how during one of Erskine's visits at Abbotsford Scott used to give him every morning the pages of the „Pirate“ which he had written the day before. Erskine then would go over to Chiefswood, the cottage where Lockhart and his wife lived, and read to them aloud what he just had received. Both, Gillies and Lockhart mention Erskine's beautiful reading:

„He read with the most vivid appreciation of sentiment, „with the most perfect ,naïveté', yet seldom or never broke down „from sympathy with an affecting passage.“

In common with Scott he had a great predilection for history. „He had much of his friend's tact in extracting the picturesque from old and, generally speaking, dull books; and in bringing out his stores he often showed a great deal of quaint humour and sly wit“. ³⁾

Scott often asked his friend's advice about historical questions. And from Erskine he got viva voce what under other circumstances he probably would have found after long researches only.

Gillies especially also mentions Erskine's friendly attitude towards literary aspirants, which encouraged many young talents which, without that, would have perished. In this he vividly reminds me of our J. V. Widmann.

It was on such an occasion that Gillies made Erskine's personal acquaintance, Erskine reading and correcting a manuscript of Gillies,

¹⁾ Lockhart, pag. 523.

²⁾ Lockhart, pag. 496.

³⁾ Lockhart, pag. 498.

which was shown to him at Ballantyne's. The acquaintance soon turned into friendship which lasted between them till death broke the tie.

The venerable „patriarch of Scottish belles-lettres“, as Lockhart calles him, was *Henry Mackenzie*, at the time about which we speak a septuagenarian. He had given up writing, but still continued to show a vivid interest in all literary matters and was held in high esteem by the literary circles of Edinburgh.

Continuous hard exercise, also kept up in his later years had kept him young in spirit too and he was able to take part in all the outdoor sports in which a great many of the Edinburgh literati, Scott foremost, delighted. Lockhart vividly describes one of the famous hunting parties of Abbotsford, in which the veteran author took an active part.

He too was most kind and encouraging to all literary aspirants, for whom he was a very indulgent critic, always trying to find out something in their works that was good and could be praised.

It was to him too, that James Ballantyne sent the manuscript of „*Waverly*“ for approbation. The publisher was very doubtful of the success of the work of the yet unknown author. But with great vivacity Mackenzie expressed his conviction that the novel would succeed and that it was „not the work of any ordinary man“.

It was also Mackenzie, as Margraf¹⁾ shows, who first roused Walter Scott's interest for German literature. He was delivering a lecture about the German theatre, in the „Royal Society of Edinburgh“, the 21st. of April 1788. Scott attended that lecture and in 1792 with seven other young fellows began to study the German language. Their first teacher was a certain Dr. Willich who held the Swiss poet Gessner in high esteem and tired his pupils in reading with them the „*Tod Abels*“. But Scott soon knew enough German to proceed alone. He took to reading Bürger & Schiller, and Margraf shows in a quite satisfactory way how that reading was not without influence on Scott's own productions.

Mackenzie's chief work is „*The Man of Feeling*“, and so strongly was his name connected with his work that he himself was generally spoken of as „the man of feeling“.

Lockhart & Gillies agree in paying the highest tribute to the „patriarch of Scottish belles-lettres“, and Gillies concludes the para-

¹⁾ Margraf, pag. 12.

graph about Mackenzie in his „Recollections of Sir Walter Scott“ ¹⁾ with the following words.

„He was an acute man of business, an admirable critic, an „entertaining companion, a steady and kind friend!“

It would lead me too far to continue with my sketches of the different Edinburgh literati of that time. For many more should be mentioned, who all took part in the literary movement at the end of the XVIIIth and the beginning of the XIXth century. Men like Dugald Stewart, the great metaphysician and his successor on the chair of philosophy at the Edinburgh University, Professor Thomas Browne and other University men greatly influenced the way of thinking of their contemporaries.

Poets like Maturin, Byron's protégé, and Thomas Campbell also were connected with the literary circles of Edinburgh.

But enough has been said about the literary life of that time in general. In my following chapter I want to speak especially about one fact, which gives to that literary epoch its own physiognomy: I mean the beginning appreciation of German literature in England at the end of the eighteenth and the beginning of the nineteenth century.

¹⁾ Pag. 36.

II. THE KNOWLEDGE OF GERMAN LITERATURE IN ENGLAND AT THE TURN OF THE XVIIITH AND XIXTH CENTURY.

My following sketch is based on the dissertation of Margraf, mentioned before, which for the first time gives a condensed account of the relations between the German literature of the turn of the XVIIIth and the XIXth century and the English literature of the same period. To the influence of the German classic literature he attributes the new evolution of English literature which at that time stood in danger entirely to become the slave of the French artificial school.

I am quoting Margraf:

„Wohl versuchte die englische Poesie aus sich selbst heraus „neues Leben zu gewinnen und Männer, wie Macpherson, Percy, „Cowper und andere eröffneten ihr auch neue Adern; die beiden „ersteren, indem sie Begeisterung für die Schätze der alten Volks- „poesie erweckten, der letztere, indem er die durch Pope und „seine Schule unterdrückte Natürlichkeit und Liebe zur Natur „wieder in die englische Dichtung einführte. Aber was sie damit „erreichten, diente im Grunde doch nur dazu, den literarischen „Boden Englands für das Eindringen deutschen Geistes empfänglich zu machen. Mit Zins und Zinseszins konnte jetzt die deutsche „Literatur das Kapital zurückerstatten, das sie nicht nur in früheren „Perioden, da sie in unselbständiger Nachahmung ein kümmerliches Dasein gefristet, sondern auch jetzt wieder im Beginn „ihrer höchsten Blütezeit von England entliehen hatte etc.¹⁾“.

Margraf repeats with these words only the opinion of English critics, who before him have openly acknowledged, how much their own literature is indebted to the Germans, at the period of which we are speaking.

With regard to Scott for instance, Gillies, in his „Recollections“,²⁾ says the following:

¹⁾ Margraf, pag. 5 f.

²⁾ l. c. page 63.

„But, as he himself commemorated, it was the modern German literature which most powerfully attracted his attention, without the study of which, perhaps, he never would have become an author of eminence.“

The first one in England probably, to recognize the greatness of our classics, and the first one, too, who took the trouble to learn our language and to read the works of our poets in the original and not from bad English translations based on French versions, was *William Taylor from Norwich*. In 1782 he met Goethe in Weimar and after returning from Germany began to translate from Bürger, Goethe and Schiller. But his favourite was Wieland. In 1828-30 he even published a history of German literature, the first one appearing in England and written in the English language. It is entitled: „A historic survey of German poetry.“ It contains several good passages, but as a whole, does not rank very high, being full of errors and mistakes. Carlyle severely criticised the chapters about Goethe and Schiller, in the „Edinburgh Review“, in 1831. But nevertheless, William Taylor was the first one to recognize the greatness of the German classic literature and did not cease to come forward to make it known among his English contemporaries. As such he holds a distinguished place in the history of literature.

Matthew Gregory Lewis, or „Monk Lewis“, as he was called by his contemporaries on account of having published his famous novel, the „Monk“, also came to Germany in 1792 and also met Goethe. He was especially impressed by the „Götz“ and by the „Räuber“, as well as by the numerous imitations those two works had called forth. All that „Ritter- and Räuber-Literatur“ is known in England by the expression „German diablerie“ and this forms the contents of Lewis' famous „Monk“.

Lewis too took to translating, especially Schiller and Kotzebue. Of importance is his translation of the „Erlkönig“. For one of his dramatic works he took Zschokke's „Abällino“ as a model.

In speaking about Henry Mackenzie I have already mentioned how *Walter Scott* came upon the treasures of German literature. Though he earnestly began to study them he never acquired a sound knowledge of the German language and soon came from imitating and translating the Germans to his own free poetical productions. But German literature formed, as Gillies says, „the spark“ which kindled the sacred fire yet sleeping in the poet's breast.

Brandl in his essay: „Die Aufnahme von Goethe's Jugendwerken in England“ [Goethejahrbuch III.] and Margraf [in his before mentioned dissertation] show in a more detailed way, how throughout the great Scotch bard's whole work the influence of German literature may be traced.

The *Lakists* too stand in relationship with German literature. Coleridge and Wordsworth went together to Germany and met Klopstock at Hamburg. The meeting proved to be a disappointment for them, Klopstock then being too old to understand the literary movement of his period, which is proved by his want of appreciation for Schiller.

The journey to Germany was of no great influence on *Wordsworth's* work. He kept all the time apart, lived even in Germany in great solitude and delighted in the sole intercourse with nature.

Not so *Coleridge*. He took to study German literature and philosophy very seriously, highly appreciating Wieland, Herder, Schiller and Lessing, but not Goethe. The translation of „Wallenstein“, which he afterwards published, is thought to be a masterpiece. Through his own original works we may trace the influence of German poetry, which Margraf shows in a satisfactory way.

Robert Southey's predilection for German literature dates from his visit to William Taylor of Norwich, in 1798: „You have made me hunger and thirst after German poetry“, he is writing to him in 1799. Klopstock and Bodmer, Kotzebue and Voss were the German authors which Southey especially read and whose works strongly influenced his own poetical productions.

At an early period of his life already *De Quincey* began to study German literature. In his opinion Schiller and Jean Paul stand „at the head of the Trans-Rhenish“ literature. Goethe is for him „an idol weak and hollow“, that „modern Germany has set up for its worship“. The only work of Goethe's, for which he finds words of praising, is the „Werther“, Goethe's „paramount work“, as he calls it.

During a five years sojourn in Germany *Crabb Robinson* had the opportunity of meeting personally a great many of the leading literary personages of that period. He was a regular student of Jena, where he attended the lectures of Schelling. He became acquainted with the philosophy of Kant. His great favourite was Goethe. After his return to England he did his best to contradict the erroneous judgment of his countrymen and to show them the real genius of Goethe.

It was in vain. De Quincey's criticism still prevailed. Goethe had a very high opinion of Crabb Robinson and thought it extraordinary, that a foreigner could get such a thorough knowledge of German literature as Robinson had.

Thomas Campbell too went to Germany, and though it is hard to show directly, where in his works he has been influenced by the Germans, we know that he greatly admired German literature.

Thomas Moore introduced in his „National Airs“ a series of German songs. The German romantic school may have been of some importance for the conception of „Lallah Rookh“, the Schlegel and Tieck and their followers having with great fervour taken up the study of oriental subjects.

Lord Byron's relations with German literature still form a subject for discussion. As he himself did not know the German language, he got all his knowledge of German literature from French, Italian or English translations.

The dedications of „Sardanapalus“ and of „Werner“ show the great admiration which Byron had for Goethe, „the first of existing writers, who has created the literature of his own country, and illustrated that of Europe“. Nevertheless Byron strongly objected to Goethe's opinion, that in „Manfred“ he had been influenced by „Faust“. He declared in a letter to Murray that he never had read „Faust“ and that he knew the great work only from a viva voce translation of „Monk“ Lewis, who had visited him at the villa Diodati, and from a few passages translated in French¹⁾ (which he perhaps found in Mme de Staël's „De l'Allemagne“).

Many attempts have been made to show the influence of German literature on Byron. But I believe that anybody who took the trouble of looking into Byrons correspondence has been convinced by the poet's own contrary assertions.

Shelley's early poetical production shows the great impression the „German Diablerie“ made on him. He continued to read the products of German literature and finally came to Schiller and Goethe, both of whom he highly appreciated: „I have been reading over and over again „Faust“ and always with sensations which no other composition excites“.

What *Carlyle* has done for the propagation of German literature in England would form the subject of an essay of its own. For me it is sufficient to state, that he liberated the English from many pre-

¹⁾ Moore's „Life of Byron“.

judices they had against German literature, especially against its greatest representant, Goethe. He had the pleasure of seeing his efforts crowned by success, so that in 1829 he could write to Goethe:

„It will gratify you to learn that a knowledge and appreciation
„of foreign, especially of German literature, is spreading with
„increased rapidity over all the domain of the English tongue,
„so that almost at the Antipodes the wise of your country are
„by this time preaching their wisdom.“

With regard to *Bulwer* and *Benjamin Disraeli* it was especially „Wilhelm Meister“ which influenced their novels. Bulwer was a great admirer of Goethe and Schiller. That Disraeli too stands under the influence of „Wilhelm Meister“ is directly maintained by Bulwer who wrote about Disraeli's „Contarini Fleming“ (New Monthly Magazine, July 1832):

„And I am quite certain that, if Wilhelm Meister had never been
„written, „Contarini Fleming“ would never have walked into
„the ideal world.“

The above mentioned poets are those who in the eyes of Margraf first must be mentioned, if we want to discuss the influence of German literature on the English. Gillies is not mentioned in their number in Margraf's essay, though Margraf is quoting his „Memoirs“ several times.

As undoubtedly Gillies holds a conspicuous place among those who in England at an early period recognised the value of the German literature of the beginning XIXth century, and as it was the one great object of his life to make its treasures known to his countrymen, I shall speak about Gillies in my next chapter in a more detailed way than it has been done till now.

III. ROBERT PEARSE GILLIES' LIFE.¹⁾

1. Parentage, early boyhood, first literary impressions.

Robert Pearse Gillies was born in 1788²⁾ near or at Arbroath and passed the early years of his life in Kincardine, from where he dates the beginning of his recollections.³⁾

His father⁴⁾ had been in the East Indies, for 16 years, during the time of Lord Cornwallis and Warren Hastings. Being an intimate friend of Colonel Thomas Deane Pearse, then second in command and being patronised by him, he got a lucrative office which put him in the position not only to give way to his „habits of profusion and generosity“, but also to save considerable sums, which he sent to Scotland, where his relations invested them in landed property, which at that time was easily to be had at very low prizes. It was so that the Gillies family became the proprietor of a considerable estate in Ayr, Forfar and Kincardine, which later on was greatly improved, partly on the plans of a landscape gardener, Mr. White, who became Gillies' teacher in the art of foresting.

The nearest neighbours of the Gillies-family were the Earl of Kintore and the noble family of Arbuthnot.⁵⁾ With these and with most of the noble families of the north Gillies' father had social connections, so that, already when a boy, Gillies got his impressions of the society of the north of Scotland, of which he gives us such a vivid description in the first volume of his „Memoirs“. It is not without bitter sarcasm that Gillies, after having for so many years associated with the refined literary society of Edinburgh and London, speaks about those rude

¹⁾ The chief source of Gillies' life are his „Memoirs of a Literary Veteran“, an autobiography in 3 volumes, which was used by Francis Watt for his sketch of Gillies' life in the Dictionary of National Biography and by Theodor Zeiger, who speaks about Gillies in his „Beiträge zur Geschichte der deutsch-englischen Literaturbeziehungen“, which appeared in Dr. Max Koch's „Studien zur vergleichenden Literaturgeschichte“ (I. vol. 1901).

Till now I was not able to find any other source for his life, except his second autobiographical work of minor importance, his „Recollections of Walter Scott, Bt.“ about which I am going to speak later on. Occasional remarks about Gillies are to be found in the works of Wordsworth, in Lord Byron's „Journal“ and in Lockhart's „Life of Sir Walter Scott“.

²⁾ I. 162.

³⁾ I. 116.

⁴⁾ I. 145 ff.

⁵⁾ I. 37.

gentlemen of the north, with their „right merry jests“, the tricks they were used to play on each other, the convivial parties they had, their abundant eating and drinking.

The boy led a solitary life in the house of his father, books and dogs and trees being his only companions, and that deep seclusion in which he passed his early boyhood was not without influence on the boy's character: during the whole of his later life he remained „unfitted for the duties of active life and the ways of the world“.

Very naturally, as soon as he was able to, the boy took to reading. One of the first books which made a deep impression on him were the „Memoirs of Baron Trenck“.:

„I conceived from it not only a hatred of oppression and „tyranny, but a lurking suspicion of all crowned heads without „exception, including confidential office bearers under them.“

He read, without being guided, anything that came into his hands and from his eighth year took to writing, covering „loads of paper with useless manuscript.“

In 1800 the boy got a tutor in the person of Dr. Glennie, a most amiable man. Dr. Glennie had studied theology and had taken a vicarage in Holland, as at that time none was free in Scotland. Coming home for a holiday he resolved to stay in his country and then accepted the offer of Dr. Gillies, Robert's father, to take care of the boy, who then was twelve years old. Gillies says about him:

„Perfect contentment with the humblest lot; the utter absence „of all ambition, except to have a kirk of his own, never mind „how small might be the stipend, these were prevailing traits „in Dr. Glennie's character, for whose memory I cherish the „sincerest respect.“

Dr. Glennie, as it was the fashion of those years, at once began to instruct the boy in Latin and Greek, reading with him in the four years of his tutorship portions of Caesar, Sallust, Tacitus, Vergil and Horace, and portions from Xenophon and Homer, but without being able to give to the boy that sound classical base which would have been necessary for earnest scientific study at the university.

In 1801, coming home from a vacation trip to Aberdeen, Dr. Glennie brought a book catalogue from an antiquarian. Robert was allowed by his father to choose after his own selection a certain number of the volumes advertised for sale. The box arrived on a wintry day and its contents formed for a long time the greatest delight of the

boy. It comprised old latin volumes about witchcraft and alchemy, a few treatises about ghosts and demons in old English and French, all of them written by the obscurest authors, whose names could not be found in any dictionary of literature. Unfortunately the boy's Latin did not suffice to understand the difficulties which those books offered to the reader, and so goodnatureedly Dr. Glennie translated a great part of them to his pupil, during their leisure hours, and Gillies zealously wrote the translations down from his writing. This little book-episode had on Gillies a most happy effect :

„From this moment onwards, I believe, there was not a „young student in all the world more anxious than I was to „gain a thorough command over foreign languages !“

Of course, in those years, for the only purpose to understand those obscure volumes. But Gillies kept this fervour for the study of foreign languages also in his later years, and this lead him to the study of the German language which afterwards proved to be so important for his whole later development.

This diablerie-mania soon made place to a theological mania, the boy, even at that early age reading the most profound theological works and secretly composing a great number of sermons, writing them on small quarto sheets, as he saw his tutor do it with his own.

In 1803 the boy got from his tutor's own book stores a little volume, which just had appeared. It was Drake's „Literary hours.“ With great enthusiasm the boy took in it's contents and „it produced an impression indelible for the rest of my life.“¹⁾ And from the reading of that book too Gillies dates his affections for literary pursuits, also his predilection for a quiet, retired life.

Among the Doctor's verses Gillies found the following scrap of blank verse :

„A little tranquil home
„Is all I ask on earth; and add to this
„My book and friend, and it is happiness.“

Those verses became the motto of his life and not the „anything rather than a quiet life“, which Zeiger mentions.²⁾ Ever and ever again during the recollections of his life Gillies is sighing for this „little tranquil home“. Speaking about the above mentioned verses, Gillies continues :

¹⁾ I. 167.

²⁾ Zeiger, I. c. 250.

„There is no great force nor melody in these lines certainly, „and yet they dwell perpetually on my mind. For the last „twenty-five years the sentiment which they express has been „uppermost there. It has been cherished to an intense, and, if „I may be allowed the expression, an impassioned degree. Conse- „quently, I have, during those years been like an unfortunate „mariner, struggling to maintain a direct course and anxiously „looking forward to a quiet harbour, yet again and again assailed „by pirates and driven astray by recurring storms, till at length „strength and stores are exhausted, no friendly flag heaves in „sight, and he „hopes against Hope“, who almost refuses to „remain with him any longer! In plainer terms, I have, during „that long period, constantly struggled against the waves of „chance, in order to reach and secure the aforesaid „tranquil „home“, to which I might cleave like the poor snail to his „shell.¹⁾

In the above mentioned book Gillies found a translation of King Casimir Sobieski's „Ode to his Life“. The boy was not satisfied by it and himself produced a new translation which „both surprised and flattered“ Dr. Glennie.²⁾ The impulse thus given, the boy went on translating, trying his verses on Horace's „Vides ut alta stet nive candidum Soracte . . .“ and going on to Vergil, whose first eclogue and first book of the „Aeneis“ he translated into heroic rhymes, a good job for a boy of fifteen!

One of the pleasantest recollections of his boyhood were the winter seasons in Kincardine. During one of these Mr. White,³⁾ with the help of a lobby-chair, taught Gillies how to skate and „many a winter's day afterwards I skated for hours together with my good friend Dr. Glennie, who had been habituated to this exercise as the best mode of pedestrian movement from town to town during the winter in Holland“.

In 1804 Dr. Glennie left his pupil, being installed as clergyman in the parish of Garvok, where Gillies often visited him during the years 1809—11.

The boy, thus left alone to his „own vague dreams and illusory notions“ continued to swallow book after book, without any kind

¹⁾ I. 168.

²⁾ I. 169.

³⁾ I. 180.

hand directing his way. Milton's „Minor Poems“ and Thomson's „Winter“ became his favourite books and going out to the forests and hills he enjoyed the vivid descriptions of nature contained in „Comus“, „Lycidas“, in the „Penseroso“ and „l'Allegro“ with still greater enthusiasm. Of course, his own poetical productions increased in number, so, that they soon filled up a quarto volume.

Gillies, already as a boy, was of rather weak constitution. In his memoirs ¹⁾ he speaks about an illness which befell him in 1804, but about the nature of which he does not give any details. He was not cured of it until ten years later, when, contrary to all medical advice he took to cold bathing, diet and physical exercise, especially horse-back riding, his favourite sport.

By friends and relations of the family the advice was given, that the boy should go to the university, and so, in 1806, the plan was conceived to bring him to the metropolis of the north, to Edinburgh.

2. University years.

Accompanied by his father and some friends Gillies arrived in Edinburgh, where arrangements had been made that he should enter an establishment kept by a French teacher and an English M. A. Besides Gillies three other students were boarding there.

The place proved to be very unsatisfactory. Being accustomed to a comfortable home, being used to his forests and hills, Gillies felt quite unhappy under the new circumstances. The boarding house was in one of the worst parts of the old town, where it occupied a flat, the fourth or fifth, of one „of those delightful edifices (places of punishment, as I thought) called lands“. ²⁾ A gloomy staircase led up to the five rooms, in which the two masters, four students and two female servants had to live! Gillies had to share his room with two of the other boarders. The meals were served in a dining parlor, which at the same time was the study. Of course, the food was bad too. Gillies gives a rather humorous account of his first supper in his new home. It made a lasting impression on him. ³⁾

All these domestic troubles would have been of minor importance, and Gillies soon would have overcome them, had the society at the boardinghouse been a more congenial one. But there was no-

¹⁾ I. 192.

²⁾ I. 195.

³⁾ I. 198 ff.

body there who could sympathise with the ideal dreamer who tried by all means to leave „the beaten track“. All his literary schemes to open new sources for literature, to find yet unknown treasures among the classical literature, were laughed at. He would have been willing to do any amount of work to get the necessary sound knowledge of Latin and Greek for his purpose. But nobody encouraged him, quite the contrary, the Englishman and the Frenchman themselves not having gone deeper into the classics than the usual academic course required it.

In the beginning the university too proved to be a disappointment for Gillies. To prepare himself for the lectures of Dugald Stewart and John Playfair, the two „stars“ of the university, Gillies had been advised to attend the lectures of Leslie, Dunbar and Christison.

Dunbar's and Christison's lectures were a disappointment for the young student. With the greatest reverence Gillies is speaking of the third of his professors, Sir John Leslie. He held the chair for mathematics, but also was studying all questions belonging to natural history. Leslie had originally been a shepherd boy, had been „discovered“ by Mr. Fergusson of Raith who paid for his education. Leslie afterwards became a wonderful scientist, but was not a good teacher, always giving „his hearers credit for powers which they did not possess“, so that it was hardly possible for the average student to follow his courses without private instructor. His students often were invited to his home, where with the greatest patience he enlightened those eager for deeper understanding. Gillies was among his guests too, but held Leslie in higher esteem as a man than as a teacher, mathematics being too far away from his favourite study: that of literature.

On account of the disappointment at the university and his private lodgings being such a failure, Gillies felt quite ill and miserable that whole winter. His only recreation were dinner-parties and invitations to befriended families and the friendly intercourse he had with Dr. Tytler,¹⁾ who like him, was trying to lay open new sources for literature, translating from Greek and Latin the most obscure books which afterwards never could be sold. And then he and Gillies „most cordially joined together in railing at the present state of literature and literary patronage at Edinburgh, where publishers, instead of paying except in the case of Walter Scott) expected to be paid and no taste for „Punics“ or „Dionysiaks“ existed even among the soi-disant literati.“²⁾

¹⁾ His uncle-in-law, I. 259.

²⁾ I. 232 f.

Among the literary schemes of those interviews between Dr. Tytler and Gillies one nearly was launched. Under the Earl of Buchan's support a new monthly repertory was to be published, Dr. Tytler, his daughter and Gillies being with the Earl the only contributors. But a near relation interfered in a decisive way, bringing forth reasons dictated by prudence.

Gillies did not make any progress in Euclid and French, both of which he studied with the two instructors of the establishment where he lived. The only result of those lessons was, that from then he hated mathematics and never thoroughly learned French.

For Latin he had as instructor the Rev. J. Mullens,¹⁾ M. A. of St. John's College, Oxford. But Mr. Mullens being a conservative Oxonian and only appreciating what was approved by his college, did not understand the young man's fervent wish to discover new veins, to read books out of the track of the average reader. The result of these lessons therefore also was not a satisfactory one, Gillies soon getting tired of the Oxonian's exclusiveness, though holding him in high esteem as a man.

During his first winter at Edinburgh already Gillies made the acquaintance of many well known literary characters. One of the most original of them was the Earl of Buchan who favoured the young literary aspirant with his special confidence. Among his fellow students he mentions especially Mr. Rutherford, later on Lord Advocate, with whom he often had long discussions about poetry and literature in general.

In March 1807 Gillies' stay at Edinburgh came to an abrupt end. An attack of a very malignant fever made friends and relations fear for the worst. His medical friend, Dr. Monro had to come thrice a day. As soon as his health permitted it, Gillies was removed from town and came once more to reside under the paternal roof where his convalescence made rapid progress.

It was a happy circumstance that Gillies' uncle, the historian Dr. Gillies, who just had been publishing his „History of the world from the reign of Alexander to that of Augustus“, came to reside with his brother's family in the north, spending with them the whole autumn of 1807.²⁾ „He applied himself this autumn to correct the defects and errors of an education which, as he said, had hitherto been woefully

¹⁾ I. 250 ff.

²⁾ I. 277 ff.

mismanaged.“ Being himself a good Greek and Latin scholar and believing the lecture of the old classics to be the necessary foundation of any sound education he took to reading Cicero with his pupil „in order to promote that expansion of intellect and knowledge of the world which I (Gillies) so sadly needed“.

During leisure hours tutor and pupil went out for long rambles through forests and hills, sometimes on foot, sometimes on horseback, extending occasionally their excursions to the Grampian mountains.

It was with the greatest regret that Gillies saw the winter approach, it having been decided that he should go back to Edinburgh. With still more reluctant feelings Gillies left home, his father's health already then being weak and declining from day to day.

Gillies did not return to the establishment of the Frenchman and the English M. A. It was resolved that he should take apartments for himself alone and so he once more found himself in Edinburgh, living in the new part of the town, where he had two parlours on a rez-de-chaussée. The object of this winter was now to attend the lectures of the Professors Dugald Stewart, Playfair and Finlayson.¹⁾

With the greatest reverence Gillies is speaking of Professor Stewart who became for him a true friend and kind adviser.²⁾ Frequent visits to his beautiful home, Whiteford House near the Canongate, where Stewart lived a secluded life, soon made that intimacy spring up between teacher and pupil, which mostly proves to be of profit for both parties. The friendship with Dugald Stewart continued also during later years, and when after the loss of a son, in 1811 Stewart left the university and retired to the country, it was maintained by correspondence.

The winter of 1807/08, commemorated by Scott in one of the prefatory epistles to „Marmion“ for its hard frost and snow drifts, was in sociable respects a very gay one. Gillies was invited to numerous dinner parties, where he met the most distinguished society of Edinburgh. Professor Playfair also was among the acquaintances thus formed. But Gillies never came to know him more intimately.

One of the most popular personages of the social circles of Edinburgh at that period, was *Jeffrey*, the „Edinburgh Review“ then being at the height of its fame. Jeffrey was a great friend of sociable life and being famous for his conversational qualities had more invitations than he possibly could accept. Gillies well remembers the mirror on

¹⁾ I. 281.

²⁾ I. 225 ff.

the mantelpiece of one of Jeffrey's rooms, which used to be decorated with a real flood of visiting cards and invitations. Jeffrey used to attend several parties during one evening, of course going last to that which he thought would be the gayest.

Though Gillies does not agree with the often unjust criticism of the „Edinburgh Review“ (as in the case of Wordsworth!) he cannot help admiring Jeffrey for what he has done and pays a high tribute to his work.¹⁾

It was during this winter, too, that *Mrs. Siddons*, the famous actress made her appearance in Edinburgh in the part of Lady Macbeth. Gillies of course went to see her.

The literary event of the winter was the publication of „*Marmion*“ in which Gillies more admired the prefatory epistles with their beautiful descriptions of nature than the poem itself.

Having received news that his father's illness had become very serious, without waiting for advice from anybody, Gillies „in a bitter cold morning of the month of March“²⁾ left town by mail, reached Arbroath at midnight and arrived at home on the afternoon of the next day. Four months of deepest anxiety and sorrow followed. But no medical skill could help and on the 26th of July, 1808, Dr Thomas Gillies died deeply regretted by all who knew him.

At the age of eighteen Gillies so became heir to a fair estate which from now on he was to manage himself, though having not the least idea about worldly matters, especially not about questions of a financial kind.

The blow of his father's early death was so hard, that the young man was thrown in gloom and despair for the whole next winter.

He returned to Edinburgh with the intention of preparing himself to become a member of the College of Justice, though he scarcely once thought of pleading a cause before the bar.

The winter was passed in retirement and avoiding all gay society, Gillies' health too being very bad:

„Through the succeeding winter I had scarcely one day's health.“³⁾

In December 1808 Gillies unanimously was elected a member of the „Speculative Society“, the famous literary and debating club of Edinburgh. It was a great honour for Gillies, as a great number of

¹⁾ I. 299 ff.

²⁾ I. 328.

³⁾ I. 333.

eminent men belonged to the same society, Walter Scott being among the foremost. The first essay Gillies produced „was about the literary character, wherein I pertinaciously argued that the poet had in this life a world of his own, thoroughly different from that of other people; also that it was his especial duty to recognize this truth and to maintain his own rights“.¹⁾ The ideas for this essay had been suggested by Sir Egerton Brydges' „Censura Literaria“, a monthly review which Gillies valued more than the „Edinburgh Review“ and the author of which afterwards became an intimate friend of his.

The winter passed quietly, Gillies being occupied with reading, Spenser then being his favourite author, and collecting old books and pictures, for which, as many of his contemporaries, he showed a real mania, often being caught by clever business men, making of him their easy prey.²⁾ It seems to me probable that during that winter his mother was living with him, though he alludes to that only indirectly.³⁾ A letter of the Earl of Buchan seems to assert my supposition.

In early spring Gillies left town again, glad to escape to the woods and hills of Kincardine.

Already during the winter of 1808 to 1809 some verses by Gillies had been published in the „Poetical Register“ for 1808, so a sonnet „To a favourite author“ and an „Ode to the Muse“.⁴⁾ Besides that an anonymous *Letter addressed to Sir Egerton Brydges*, its subject being the same as that of „Childe Alarique“, was published by him in the „Ruminator“, a series of essays accompanying the „Censura Literaria“. This publication marks the beginning of Gillies' publishing activity.

The summer of 1809 passed quietly, Gillies being occupied with agriculture, horticulture, forestry and landscape gardening, improving his hereditary estates by planting trees, thinning woods or pruning them.

With the beginning of the winter Gillies again returned to town, most unwillingly, as he much would have preferred continuing his rural work to taking up again his studies at the university.

More and more his favourite occupation turned to collecting rare old books. It was a kind of bibliographical mania which in those years had taken hold of the literary society of Edinburgh. Enormous sums were paid for rare old editions, some of them having not the least value.

¹⁾ I. 335.

²⁾ I. 337.

³⁾ I. 334 and 343.

⁴⁾ II. 5.

Constable realised great sums in trading with old books and laid, in Gillies' opinion, in this way the foundation of his fame and fortune.¹⁾

Gillies bought old books for another reason than the mere collector's mania. The secret hope of striking new veins which might prove a new source for literature was still strong in him, and he so accumulated a whole library of rare old books, without however attaining his object. He extended his researches so far as to the library of the Edinburgh college, where he hoped to find some yet unpublished manuscripts of the Scotch poet *Drummond*²⁾. Under the supervision of a member of the senatus academicus and the sublibrarian he searched „Drummond's press“, where however he did not find anything worth to be recorded.

The bibliographical mania had one good result: several new editions of the works of poets long neglected and half forgotten were made, some of them beautiful facsimiles for book lovers who had not the means or wish to buy expensive original editions.

During the winter of 1809/10 the bookselling and publishing house of John Ballantyne and Co. was established in Edinburgh. Gillies soon became one of its regular attendants and was asked by the Ballantynes to contribute some verses to their newly published „Edinburgh Annual Register“.

In the „Annual Register“ for 1808 there appeared from Gillies an „*Ode to the River N*“ (Northesk) in the poetical department, and an elegy, which afterwards was entitled „*Fragment of a Miserable*“.³⁾ Gillies, in later years, himself thought little about those first juvenile verses. He himself calls them pitiful, an expression which cannot be applied to his ballad „*Glennfilas*“ which even to-day can be appreciated. It appeared anonymously in the next volume of the „Annual Register“.

Its contents are, in a few words, the following: The author is wandering in the highlands. He suddenly has a vision. A seraph with a lyre appears and encourages him to undertake the task of singing the old legends of the valley, hitherto guarded by him. — The waves of Loch Achray are glittering in the sun, when he wakes up again.

His interest for old pictures gave Gillies the idea of learning how to copy them. So in the spring of 1810 he began to study landscape

¹⁾ II. 3.

²⁾ II. 8 ff.

³⁾ II. 12.

painting, going to the studio of a good artist. But he did not keep up his efforts and soon entirely gave up painting:

„It was the old story over again, labour without rational „foundation, the result of which proved no better than twisting „ropes of sand.“¹⁾

The year 1810 was a quiet one for Gillies, who again passed the summer in Kincardine. A copy of Scott's „Lady of the Lake“ was sent to him thither. The poem made a great impression on him. On the 12th of May he wrote a few verses about it, which he later on published together with various fragments and „Childe Alarique“. They are entitled: „*On Reading the Lady of the Lake*“.

Gillies passed the first part of the winter 1810/11 in Kincardine and returned to Edinburgh only about Christmas.²⁾ The town was so crowded that he could not find any private lodgings and had to take rooms in a hotel.

An important acquaintance of that winter was that of Sir Brooke Boothby with whom, during the following years, he kept up a most friendly intercourse, which has not been without influence on the new turn his literary plans took: I mean the interest for German literature, Sir Brooke, as before said, having been in Weimar at the duchess Anna Amalia's court.

Gillies brought Sir Brooke together with Scott. Scott at that time was a frequent guest of Gillies who, on his side, had to decline most of the great man's kind invitations, his health being too weak to go out in society. Scott took the kindest interest in the young literary aspirant and encouraged him wherever he could.

The year 1811 marks the beginning of the financial troubles which so much embittered Gillies' life. Against the advice of wise friends he lent several thousand pounds to relations who used the money for a speculation. It failed a few years later and Gillies had to carry the loss entirely alone. In 1815 his landed property had to be given up and from then on the poet was homeless.

During the rest of the year 1811 Gillies was occupied with various literary plans. He wrote a great deal of lyric poetry and also undertook a heroic *Poem on King Robert Bruce's life and fortunes*, of which however only two cantos were finished, and as much as I can find out, never were published. He had for sources John Barbour's

¹⁾ II. 21.

²⁾ II. 32.

„Metrical Chronicle“, edited by his friend Dr. Jamieson, as well as Kerr's prose history of Bruce's reign.¹⁾ The poem was never finished.

Gillies passed the winter of 1811 to 1812 in the country. Not yet suspecting then the great losses of the next years and not having the least idea of his landed property being in danger to be taken away from him, he continued to improve it by planting and pruning and making considerable changes to the house.²⁾ During this winter he began to write his „*Childe Alarique*“, the first canto of it being written in two mornings. The poem was published anonymously by James Ballantyne & Co. in 1813 and was rather favourably received by the public. A second edition and a third one were necessary, and the poem was, too, twice reprinted in America.

I shall try to give in the following lines a short résumé of the poem.

CHILDE ALARIQUE. A POET'S REVERIE

Motto :

„We poets in our youth begin in gladness
But there of comes in the end despondency and
madness!“

[Wordsworth.]

Part First.

Childe Alarique has come home to the land of his early days. Poetic ardours glow again in the beauties of nature. Woe is vanquished by them. He is happy to be at anchor again after the storm, during which he had lost all his hope. He will leave Ambition, stay in the mountains and follow their Muse.

Nature prepares great joys for the enthusiast. Alarique goes on in the „dewy morn of May“, singing his songs of gladness. He is watching the mild rays and is bathed in ambrosial dew. What transport to watch the evening sky! Romance brings forward chiefs and kings that have fought on the plains and on the hills, on which Alarique is standing.

In autumn the Childe weaves into new garlands the heath bell. He then is wandering through rocky Glenfilas, when suddenly he starts

¹⁾ II. 59.

²⁾ II. 76 f.

from his tranquility: A seraph appears, the genius of poetic inspiration. The Childe is kneeling down. The harp of the angel is saluting him. The seraph makes the Childe a present of it, taking from him the promise, never again to tempt the raging deep and at the same time according him everything that will befit the Muse's Child.

Winter has passed. Spring has come again. On Loch Katrine's wooded shore Alarique is listening to the legends of the shepherds. He is wandering through the forests, transported by the beautiful tints of the evening. Often too the poetic youth gets inspiration from the lowland vales with their castles and peaceful hamlets. He portrays the wild forms of his creative brain not only in poetry, but also in painting. In old ruins, in the twilight, his imagination revives the pictures of ancient times. The Guardian Genius comes to visit him there. Morning and eve he is spending with her. They together do frolics with the Naiads and Fairies.

Part Second.

This life of innocence finds a sudden end. A jovial crew finds Alarique in the forest. Bragadacchio is their leader, an ordinary, unfeeling, worldly minded character. They have lost their way in the woods and seek refuge in Alarique's „wild mansions“.

The guests express astonishment to find Alarique spending his days far from court. Childe Alarique tells them, how much he enjoys this solitude „Follow Fame's trumpet, you have duties“, says Bragadacchio. He wins the youth, who, though with regrets, leaves his groves.

Over the wild waves the bark brings him to Bragadacchio's city. Proud does it look. But, when Alarique has landed, all dreams are over. The inhabitants of the city only care for sensual joys. In vain the Childe is reading every countenance. Only base passions he can discover.

Disappointment finally drives Alarique into this crowd. He is brought to Bacchanalian rout and disorder and loses his purity.

Rescued and restored to his peaceful groves he seeks in vain to purify himself again. All the dreams and joys have fled. All to him is desolate, cold and dreary. The Muse has departed. Spring has come again. But nothing is stilling the voice that is accusing him. Innocence and inward glee have gone and with them all that was beautiful. Silent is his harp :

„If chance with trembling hand he touched the lyre
„That on the wild birch-bough suspended hung,
„With feeble hope to wake the wonted fire,
„What words can paint the grief his heart that stung,
„To hear the altered notes that feebly rung! ¹⁾)

„ — — — — — — — — — —

„For ever crushed and dead Hope's once resplendent blaze!“

His mind is like a grove, the trees of which have been chopped. —
Morn after morn passes without change. In Winter only he feels some
soothing sympathy for what is going on around him.

It is midnight. A horribly looking spectre makes him follow it.
He comes to a swollen river. Everything seems to be over, when
suddenly the lights of a new guest make the spectre vanish.

Part Third.

Instead of Despair, Religion, a form in spotless garb arrayed,
appears. She gives to Alarique a wonderful gem, the light of reason
and conscience. It shall be a talisman against his woes. But misery
will be his, if he neglects to remember the giver or if he does not
keep it free from stains.

The vision vanishes; but music is heard and the talisman's ray
enlightens the forest. The music dies out and the talisman is guiding
Alarique home. He is victorious over Melancholy which has haunted
him for so long.

Winter also has it's charms. The Childe rises with gratitude towards
Religion which appears again for a moment. The talisman is bringing
him renewed joys. He curses the passions, under the dominion of
which he has been. Happy he who escapes from them or dies. But
the gem banishes from the Childe's mind all dark thoughts. Instead
of them hope and confidence in Heaven return. Celestial mysteries
are above human laws and thoughts. All investigation is in vain. The
glories of the sky give us confidence into the power of the Almighty.

Alarique feels that influence. The greatness of the sky makes him
meditate. Even winter's mournful reign is lovely to his eyes. He
enjoys the snow storms. At home he enjoys the legends „wild with
chivalry“, written by ancient bards.

¹⁾ Second part, 21.

Spring brings again his seducers. His talisman helps him to repel them vigorously. A demon nearly robs him of his gem. Religion appears and advises him to listen quietly to everything, but to remain unmoved, to keep his selfcontrol:

„Henceforth

„He moved amid the scenes of vice and woe

„To him innocuous, trusting in the power

„Of her, whose arm had saved him from the blow

„Of the fell fiend Despair at midnight hour,

„When the loud torrent raged and darkest clouds did lour.“

„Childe Alarique“, of course, is an allegory. In some notes which follow the poem as an appendix, Gillies explains what he meant by it. I am quoting the following passages:

„The species of vicissitude which the author has attempted
„to describe, has been common to every highly gifted mind
„from Shakespeare to Cowper. Some of the noblest intellects have
„been overthrown in the struggle. Others have been supported
„by that inestimable light of reason, which, though clouded for
„a while, was too powerful to be wholly quenched. Shakespeare
„survived; but Chatterton perished.“

The title of the poem, of course, was suggested to the autor by Byron's romance. He too was influenced by Beattie, Gray and Mrs. Tighe.

The poem has several beautiful passages and is full of imaginative power. The poet himself, in later years, severely criticises his early poetry, with regard to „Childe Alarique“ too severely, in my opinion. We may however doubt if this severity is sincere, as he mentions Alarique's success with a certain pride.

In May 1812 Gillies „returned to Edinburgh in order to assume the gown and wig of an advocate, and pay £ 360 for that honour, „an honour which I prized for no other reason than because it gave me access to an enormous store of books“.

3. The „briefless barrister and bachelor“.

As may be seen from the above quoted remarks, Gillies did not think about practising law, but continued his literary pursuits, greatly encouraged by friends, such as Walter Scott and Sir Egerton Brydges, the latter's letters especially overflowing with praise for the juvenile poetry of the young aristocrat, whom he already sees climbing up the

ladder of reputation and fame. It is quite touching to read those letters of the old man to the young one, in whom he sees his own youth revived, with all its romantic hopes and ideals, yet uncrushed by disappointments. And Gillies, on the other side, was deeply grateful for all the encouragement he got from the well known man of letters.

The immediate result of the correspondence with Sir Egerton was the publication of several of Gillies' poems which appeared in the „Ruminator“. ¹⁾

Before leaving town Gillies rented a new home as his future residence. It was situated on Southcastle Street, immediately under the castle rock and had formerly belonged to the Earl of Buchan. He then returned to Kincardine, to Balmakewan, ²⁾ his country place.

With the beginning of the winter of 1812/13 Gillies returned to Edinburgh. As the new house did not prove to be what Gillies had expected, he removed to another one in Northumberland Street, in January 1813. ³⁾ Thither he removed a quantity of his books and some of his pictures. Scott was a frequent visitor at his house and freely used Gillies' books, sometimes „stowing three or four volumes into each capacious pocket, and carrying others on his arm“. ⁴⁾

Ill health prevented Gillies from doing any serious work. He nevertheless kept up his correspondence with Sir Egerton Brydges and kept an open house for the Edinburgh literati. William Erskine, Pinkerton and James Hogg were of his frequent guests.

During that winter „Childe Alarique“ came out of the press, also „a woeful attempt at a prose novel in two volumes“, probably the „Confessions of Sir H. Longueville“, which are mentioned by Francis Watt in the D. N. B., in the list of Gillies' works.

In the summer of 1813 Gillies removed to Heriot Row, where he had furnished a house, and in August he went to the north again, inviting Mr. Pinkerton as guest. Though they did not very well agree together, on account of Mr. Pinkerton's strongly pronounced egoism, the rest of the summer passed very agreeably, visits to the neighbours and excursions to historical places filling the days. ⁵⁾

The winter of 1813/14 was a very severe one. Gillies was suffering and hardly left the house, receiving in his home only a few

¹⁾ II. 85.

²⁾ II. 113.

³⁾ II. 117.

⁴⁾ II. 123.

⁵⁾ II. 124 ff.

select friends. In the autumn of the following year he once more migrated and took a house in Great King Street, where he remained for the following twelve years. The most important event of this year was his meeting with Wordsworth, who for a few days had come to Edinburgh on his Scottish tour and met Gillies at a dinner party given in his honour by Mrs. Wilson. A walk up to Corstorphin Hill, the next day, made the acquaintance a closer one and the result was a lasting friendship kept up by a correspondence, highly profitable for Gillies' literary education. Wordsworth's sonnet „Rise, Gillies, rise!“ addressed to our author, shows how great his interest was for him and the interesting letters published by Gillies in his „Memoirs“, ¹⁾ show how earnestly Wordsworth encouraged Gillies in his literary pursuits, criticising however freely, when he thought it necessary. In Wordsworth's letters addressed to Gillies, several poems of Gillies' are mentioned which never have been published, as f. i. „Albert“ and „Elile“, „the Visionary“, ²⁾ „Lucia“, ³⁾ „Montalban“. ⁴⁾

To give a specimen of the free criticism Wordsworth applied to the literary productions of the young author, I shall quote a few passages from a letter, dated Rydal Mount, April 9th, 1816. Wordsworth goes on as follows:

„Your obliging present reached me yesterday, several hours
„before the post brought me your letter. I read the volume
„through immediately, and paid particular attention to the parts
„that were new to me. I need not say, that I found parts that
„gave me considerable pleasure; nevertheless, as your preface
„encourages me to speak with sincerity, I shall act unjustly both
„to you and myself, if I do not frankly state to you that these
„compositions, while they possess the same beauties as those,
„which I have formerly seen of yours, labour also under the
„same defects in full as great a degree. Your mind does not
„look sufficiently out of itself, and it is impossible that you
„should do justice to your genius, till you have acquired more
„command over the current of your somewhat morbid sensibilities. I trust that you will not be hurt at my speaking thus
„without reserve. What would it avail to be insincere? Besides,
„you are thoroughly aware of your own infirmity, and what

¹⁾ II. 145 ff.

²⁾ II. 167.

³⁾ II. 168.

⁴⁾ II. 168.

„I say, if objectionable, must mainly be so on account of being „superfluous As I have before said, the constitutional „disease of your poetry is want of variety. I find, therefore, „some difficulty, which has most pleased or displeased me“ etc. etc.¹⁾.

But Wordsworth also gives high praise. About a poem, „Oswald“, he is writing.

„The six lines at the top of page 71 are excellent composition; the sentiment is natural to the character. Is there „anything like this in Lord Byron's poems? The language is „better than his, for the most part, appears to be, but the „sentiment appears somewhat in his style.“

In the summer of 1814 Gillies for the first time did not leave town, being too busily engaged in social life. A small circle of friends then had formed itself and used to meet every afternoon for walks or rides on horseback and in the evening for gay dinner parties with following music and dance. It is probably that period of Gillies' life that Wordsworth is referring to in the introductory note to his sonnet „From the dark chambers of dejection freed“, where he says:

„Poor Gillies never rose above that course of extravagance „in which he was at that time living and which soon reduced „him to poverty and all its degrading shifts, mendicity being „far from the worst. I grieve, whenever I think of him, for he „was far from being without genius and had a generous heart, „not always to be found in men given up to profusion.“

But this gay life came to a sudden end by Gillies' marriage, to which he briefly refers in his Memoirs, without however giving any details about it. His wife, probably, was the sister of a friend of Gillies, captain Macdonnel, who in the subsequent financial troubles of his brother-in-law did his best to help him out of it.

4. Gillies' start on the „unbeaten track“.

The year 1815 marks the beginning of the financial calamities, out of which Gillies during the whole remainder of his life never again could extricate himself.

The peace of the year 1815 had brought a kind of panic on the money market and Gillies, a few months after having settled into

¹⁾ II. 160 ff.

domestic life, received notice, that the bonds he had signed in 1811 should be enforced if he could not pay the sum due to his creditors. As it was impossible for him to find the necessary money, his estates were sold to a colonel Hay and irrevocably lost. Though an income large enough to live comfortably was left to Gillies, it was not without the darkest forebodings that he took leave for ever of his home, and moving the rest of his belongings to town, definitively settled down in Edinburgh.

With proper management the „little tranquil home“, his life's ideal, never could have been disputed to him. But his whole education had been so that he had not any idea about practical life and being used to live a life wherein the money question never had had a part, he could not change his habits from one day to the other, as his situation peremptorily demanded it.

Then too, he had a profession and he for a short time began to practice law. But after receiving once after ten days hard labour a fee of three guineas, he gave up these pursuits, and from then on resolved to use his time for literary labour alone.

The life in Gillies' house very little changed. His home in Great King-Street continued to be the meeting place for all sorts of literary people. Distinguished foreigners too were received there.

The year 1816 passed in a calm way. Gillies wrote a good many verses, most of them being now lost. „Oswald“¹⁾, a poem in four books, was printed in 1817 as a beautiful quarto; but it was never published.

The year 1816 is a markstone in Gillies' literary career:

„I had begun my gropings in the dark after foreign literature, having, I know not how, [unless it were by some hints „from Sir Walter Scott] got a notion, that the German language „concealed from us an inexhaustible mine of the richest ore.“²⁾

Zeiger's remark³⁾ that de Quincey was the only friend who was able to give him knowledge of German literature, does not seem quite correct to me. Of course, he was best able to give ampler information about it; but already before his visit to Edinburgh, which took place during the winter of 1815/16 or 1816/17⁴⁾, Gillies' interest for German literature had been roused, very probably by Walter Scott.

¹⁾ II. 217.

²⁾ II. 217.

³⁾ Zeiger, D. E. a. d. E. L. 250.

⁴⁾ II. 218.

Gillies fervently now began to study languages, especially German. Unfortunately German teachers and German books were rare in Edinburgh. Gillies' first teacher was a Prussian Jew, who knew very little German; the second one was an impostor, a certain Baron Rabenstein, who deceived a great many members of Edinburgh society. Finally earnest study was taken up with Dr. William Gardiner, who had been English pastor at Danzig. Gillies at the same time began to study German, Italian and Spanish, the latter with Mr. Wallace.

At the end of 1817 Mr. Blackwood began to publish his since far famed „Edinburgh Magazine“, which from the beginning became very popular on account of a witty jeu d'esprit, the „Chaldean Manuscript“, a satire on a great number of well-known Edinburgh personages, attributed to James Hogg. Lockhart and John Wilson were the chief supporters of the new Magazine and Gillies became one of its early contributors¹⁾.

During the following three years Gillies was occupied with quiet literary labour. The summers were spent at the cottage of Lasswade, the winters at Edinburgh, where his house continued to be a favourite centre of the best literary society. Hogg was a frequent guest, as well as John Kemble, the great actor, who then had retired into private life and settled in Edinburgh.

Through the intervention of Consul Mitchell Gillies had access to a great store of modern German books and at once plunged into the depth of the German Romantic literature, finding at length those „stores unknown“, for which he had been looking for so many years, and at once beginning the work to communicate them to the English public.

The first German work he translated into English was *Müllner's „Schuld“*. It was printed by Ballantyne under the title of „*Guilt*“ or „*the Anniversary*“ and had an unexpected success. Lockhart made a review of it in Blackwood's Magazine and brought some extracts of the work. The reviews about modern German works afterwards continued under the title of „*Horae Germanicae*“ which later on were superseded by the „*Horae Danicae*“.

I am quoting the chief passages of this first of the „*Horae Germanicae*“²⁾. Lockhart writes as follows:

„The best German critics of the present day seem to be „agreed in thinking very poorly of their own dramatic literature.

¹⁾ II. 237.

²⁾ Blackwood's Magazine, Vol. VI, N. XXXII, November 1819.

„They are proud indeed . . . of a few masterly pieces, in which
„the intellectual subtlety of Lessing, — the uncontrollable fire
„and energy of Schiller — and the matchless union of reason
„and passion which characterizes the genius of their Goethe,
„have been abundantly displayed. But they complain with
„justice, that no one of these great men has given them
„such a number of fine works, composed upon one set of prin-
„ciples and in one form, as might furnish anything like a model
„for the erection of a true national literature of the drama.“

These are the general remarks Lockhart is making about the German classical drama. They are characteristic for the general idea about German literature, then maintained in England and show, how much even at that time there remained to be done to overcome the erroneous judgements even among the leaders of the literary society.

Lockhart continues in giving a comparison between Schiller's and Goethe's dramatic work, highly in disfavour to Schiller. There follows an appreciative paragraph on „Nathan“ and a sketch of the German drama after Schiller's death.

Müllner's „Guilt“ is thought to be one of the best after Schiller's productions. It is compared with the „Braut von Messina“ and „Macbeth“. The important part, destiny is acting here, is highly appreciated. The drama then is analysed in a detailed manner, many quotations from the translation being interwoven.

Then Lockhart continues:

„One word however, before we close the column, concerning
„the translation, from which we have quoted so lavishly. Our
„readers may rest assured, that it is executed with astonishing
„closeness to the original — and having said this much, we
„have said all that is necessary.

„The translator (who is, as we understand, Mr. Gillies, the
„author of „Childe Alarique) has exhibited masterly skill in the
„management of our Blank Verse — but that is the least of
„his praises. He has shown himself to be not a skilful versifier
„merely, but a genuine poet, for no man but a true poet can
„catch and give back again, as he has done, the fleeting and
„ethereal colours of poetry and passion. He has produced a
„work, which is entitled to take its place as a fine English
„tragedy — the finest, we have no difficulty in saying, that
„has for many years been added to that part of our literature.“

„Our readers will observe, that this translation has not yet been published. The author has merely had a few dozens of copies printed for the use of his friends and has been so kind as to send us one of them. It is a very fine specimen of typography, one of the most elegant that ever issued from the press of Ballantyne. But we trust he will soon give the world a large edition. The encouragement this play must receive, will also, we hope, stimulate Mr. Gillies to further efforts in the same style. What a fine field lies open for one who possesses in such perfection as he does, the two richest languages in Europe — the German and the English! —“

This very complimentary review of Gillies' work was only one in the long series of appreciative opinions. Complimentary letters came in to Blackwood from the most different sides and Gillies thus was encouraged to continue on the „unbeaten track“ which at last he had struck upon. During the years 1819 to 1827 the „*Horae Germanicae et Danicae*“ continued and were received with undiminished interest. All of them, except six, as Max Blatt remarks contrary to Gillies' statement, who only did not acknowledge the authorship of two,¹⁾ were written by Gillies himself. Of the six „*Horae*“ not written by Gillies, at least two are based on his translations. I shall speak about these essays in a more detailed way in a following chapter of my study.

Besides Lockhart's favourable opinion on „*Guilt*“ I have to mention two other complimentary letters, addressed to Gillies a short time after Lockhart's review had appeared. They came from Harris, the manager of Covent Garden and from Elliston, then manager of Drury Lane. Both of them encouraged Gillies to adapt „*Guilt*“ to the stage. But he then too much occupied by his translatory work, did not find time to meet their wishes and so abandoned entirely the idea of entering the new field which was opened to him.

5. The trip to Germany.

At the suggestion of Mrs. Arthur Clifford, Gillies' sister-in-law, plans for a trip to Germany were made. Though Gillies' finances were not very prosperous, the yearly expenditure of the last years always having exceeded the income, the trip nevertheless was resolved and

¹⁾ II. 263.

after having shut up the house in King Street, on the 15th of May 1821 the whole family embarked for Hamburg, on the sailboat „Elbe“.

„Our plans were very economical“, Gillies says,¹⁾ „but for the exclusive use of the best cabins during that short voyage, I paid in advance the sum of 86 £; rather a heavy rent charge, being at the rate of about twenty guineas per day; but it was considered right and moderate then“.

After a four days' journey the travellers landed at Hamburg. Gillies beautifully describes the evening hours on board the ship, which he highly enjoyed being entirely free from sea-sickness. Less favourable is his account of his and his people's impressions of Hamburg. After a vain search of ten days for „a little tranquil home“, where he could have settled and begun his literary work, the party resolved to leave Hamburg and to go on to Berlin.

Two carriages, one brought from England, the other purchased in Hamburg, brought the English travellers to the Prussian metropolis. The route goes over the Lüneburg heath, and it is not without smiling that we read Gillies' account of the hardships, the party had to undergo, the chief reason of which was, that the travellers were always very much disappointed not to find the English comfort to which they were accustomed. As Gillies and his party were travelling en grands seigneurs the landlords made according bills and though Gillies' account of the adventures of the journey bears the characteristics of exaggeration, it gives a vivid picture of especial interest for the history of civilisation. In his „Memoirs“ Gillies mentions, that at that time he published some of his impressions in England, giving at the same time hints for English travellers.

In Berlin Gillies tried to meet E. T. A. Hoffmann, of whose genius he speaks with high admiration. But Hoffmann being then ill, the meeting did not take place. Gillies was equally unlucky with the Baron and Baroness de la Motte-Fouqué, whom he would have liked to meet. But they unfortunately were then residing in the country.

After a short stay in Berlin, where Dr Lappenberg of the English legation was their frequent guest, and after a short visit to Potsdam, full of the souvenirs of Frederic the Great, the party continued their trip to Dresden.

Passing through Wittenberg, which having kept its character of a mediaeval town seemed to Gillies to be bewitched, passing over

¹⁾ II. 270.

the battlefield of Torgau and passing through Meissen, the party finally reached Dresden.

Gillies is full of praise for Dresden and its society to which he had been introduced by Dr Lappenberg. Very interesting is his account of a literary soirée at Madame de Quandt's. Tieck¹⁾ was reading a chapter out of his lectures on the old English school of dramatic poetry and then gave the analyses of his friend Houwald's last drama, the last act of which he read in extenso. Gillies makes complimentary remarks to Tieck's reading.

„The sincerity, force, clearness and melody with which he
„recites the impassioned parts of the dialogue have an effect
„irresistibly attractive, the more so as contrasted with his ordinary mildness of tone and nonchalant calmness of demeanour.“

Though all the plans were made for a longer stay at Dresden Gillies and his family suddenly left the Saxon capital. Mrs. Arthur Clifford, Gillies' sister in law, had been called back to France and their relations resolved to accompany her to Francfort-on-the-Mayne, intending nevertheless to revisit Dresden as soon as it would be possible.

Passing Leisig the party proceeded to Weissenfels on the Saale, the residence of Hofrath Müllner, the author of „Guilt“.

Gillies passed an evening with Müllner of whose poetic abilities he had a great opinion. He did not find, however, in the poet the person whom he had expected the author of „Guilt“ to be. „More fat than Bard beseems“,²⁾ Hofrath Müllner had not at all heroic or tragical „allures“. On the contrary; „in his ordinary conversation he was more inclined to sarcasm and humour than to grave discussion.“

Gillies highly admired Müllner's productive power. Besides his poetical works he was for a long time the editor of the „Morgenblatt“, a weekly journal and of the „Mitternachtsblatt“, the contents of which were exclusively a product of his pen.

At Weissenfels he had established a private theatre, where under his management his plays and those of friends of his, like Houwald's, were produced, he himself often acting the principal parts.

Müllner's habits of life were very excentric ones. He rose when other people went to bed and to the „Good morning“ of his family he generally answered with a „Good night“. The day Gillies called

¹⁾ II. 334 ff.

²⁾ III. 3.

on him late in the afternoon, the poet was not yet up and it was not till about 8 o'clock that he appeared at the inn where Gillies had invited him to dine with him and his family. During the conversation he seriously maintained that midnight was the best hour for literary work, „the blood being quicker at that time, and consequently the brain clearer.“ ¹⁾

Next day Gillies and his family proceeded to Weimar. The Englishmen were struck by the quietness of the place. „The ducal palace . . ., the theatre, the library, museums and picture galleries“, all were there, „open to the public; but where was the public?“ The inn was as bad as in any other little German town and the keeper seemed quite astonished, when he saw that his guests seemed everything else but pleased by what he was able to offer them.

Of course, the only object of this visit to Weimar was a personal meeting with Goethe. Though Goethe at that time was recovering from a serious illness, his eyes with a yellow suffusion of the eyeballs still indicating it, he received the English visitors, when they called at his home. Gillies was accompanied by his brother-in-law, captain Macdonnel. Both were struck by the cold formality of the whole interior of Goethe's house which greatly contrasted to the notions an Englishman had of the home of a poet. Cold and frigid as his home was the poet himself and for his visitors „had veritably the air and aspect of a revenant.“ ²⁾ His was not an appearance, but an apparition!“ The conversation was about the Englishmen who had been visiting Weimar. Goethe remembered several of them and then with especial interest, inquired after the health of Scott who just then had recovered from his serious attack of illness.

The interview was a very short one, though Gillies tried his best to introduce literary topics which he thought would be of interest to Goethe, as Byron and „Faust“, „Wilhelm Meister“ and English authors, a. s. o. Goethe „cared not a straw about praise and was inaccessible to flattery“. Gillies had expressed his wish to find an abode at Weimar, to settle there perhaps for a certain time. Goethe gave him the address of the court bookseller Hoffmann, who happened to have a furnished house to rent, and at parting said that he would rejoice to hear that Gillies would find something suitable for himself and his family.

¹⁾ III. 9.

²⁾ III. 14.

But Weimar was not attractive enough for the Englishmen and so the party went on, passing Erfurt, Gotha and Fulda and finally reaching Frankfort-on-the-Mayne.

Here furnished apartments were easily found and Gillies at once settled down to work systematically to get a more thorough knowledge of the German language, the chief object of his whole trip to Germany.

In Dr Becker of Offenbach he found a most profound philologist who now daily came to instruct him in German in a really scientific way. He succeeded so well with his pupil that Gillies was able to translate and adapt Becker's „*German Grammar*“ for Englishmen, a work which afterwards was published by Murray in London. ¹⁾

With Captain Äkental of Upsala Gillies also began to study Swedish ²⁾ and at once began to grope in the darkness of Swedish literature with the strong belief to find there again „unexplored mines“. Only a later generation has struck upon them, ours; but it is highly meritorious for Gillies to have felt the greatness of the literature of the North at a time, when it was still nearly unknown in the other parts of Europe.

Autumn and winter passed in quiet literary labour, seldom interrupted by social events, as concerts, theatre and dinner parties. On Gillies' request Müllner's „Schuld“ ³⁾ was performed at the theatre. That was one of the few representations to which he assisted.

In the spring of 1822 Gillies and his family had to leave Frankfort. The long stay there and Gillies incessant labour had not been without a practical result: he had now a thorough command of the German language and proudly could say of himself, that, as a translator and adaptator of German literature he had scarcely one competitor to contest the field. ⁴⁾

After a pleasant journey down the Rhine and a less agreeable short stay in Holland, of which Gillies has none but unpleasant impressions, he and his party again embarked on the „Elbe“ for Scotland, and after a stormy passage safely arrived in Edinburgh.

6. The „panic“, the cause of Gillies' financial break down. The F. Q. R.

During Gillies' absence his house in town had been occupied by the Earl of Portsmouth and it was still so, when the Gillies family

¹⁾ III. 34.

²⁾ He also took a course of Dutch, with Baron Amsberg, II. 50.

³⁾ III. 39.

⁴⁾ III. 44.

returned to Edinburgh. But the cottage of Lasswade was ready to receive them and as early as was convenient they took up their abode in the country.

During Gillies' year of absence in Germany Blackwood's Magazine had assumed a leading place in the literary life of the north and the best of the Edinburgh literati were connected with it. Literary work also was very highly remunerated, which gave a new impulse to the productive power of the authors then living.

A whole colony of literati had settled down at Lasswade. I have mentioned its chief representatives in a preceding chapter.

The event of the year was the visit of George IV. to Scotland. The king was received with great festivities and demonstrations of loyalty and then made a brief stay at Dalkeith House, in the near vicinity of Gillies' cottage.

Incessant literary toil filled up Gillies' whole time. Nearly all of it was translation work. Gillies remarks about it:

„To some it may have appeared, that the process of translation is a servile stupefying employment. On the contrary, I found that during a task of this kind, original plots invariably rose up unsought for; but the demand for translations being more than I was able to satisfy, my original inventions were allowed to lie over, waiting more leisure.“

Blackwood was a ready customer for all that Gillies translated and believed, that in this way, Gillies could easily make 700 £ a year. But the poet, optimistic as during his whole life, believed that Blackwood underrated his productive power and estimated his possible income at the double rate, arranging his plans according to that idea which proved to be highly erroneous.¹⁾

The „economical“ trip to Germany had made a „sad inroad“ on Gillies' finances, and money difficulties began to threaten from the very moment he returned to Scotland.

But up to 1825 his literary work enabled him to meet the most pressing demands, he realising considerable sums by his translations which he did only grosso modo with the intention to improve them later on, but being hindered in that by his publishers who thought they were good enough for publication as they were. Gillies says, that eight volumes thus have been published.²⁾ I could not find any trace

¹⁾ III. 79.

²⁾ III. 93.

of them neither in the sources of the poet's life nor in the catalogue of the British Museum.

The year 1825 brought the great financial panic which affected all classes, the poor and the rich. Nobody trusted to his neighbour. Ready cash was all that was accepted and even Walter Scott with all his reputation and his high income came into money difficulties.

For Gillies the panic was a disastrous event. Though his debts did not amount to his still remaining funds, his creditors fell down upon him and obliged him to raise money at a rate which was a great sacrifice for the author. Scott in a most friendly way had offered him Chiefswood as residence and a sum of ready money, both of which Gillies unfortunately did not accept.

During the winter of 1825 to 26 Gillies had to lead a real fight against his creditors, obstinately refusing to „break up“ and being so far more lucky than Walter Scott, as he was able to keep his town house, while that of the great author, situated in North Castle Street, was sold by auction, at a time when Lady Scott was on her death-bed!

Loss of liberty was threatening Gillies all through the year 1826.¹⁾ He was proclaimed a rebel against the law and Walter Scott had to sign the warrants of those very proclamations. Thus again reminded of Gillies he gave him the idea to extricate himself out of his troubles by trying to found a literary periodical which should bring essays about foreign literature and translations of foreign works, keeping so the English public in touch with the spiritual life of the neighbouring nations. In his letter to Gillies Scott said, that he thought him „eminently qualified for such a task“ and also, that he believed an income large enough to keep him out of trouble could be made out of it. Scott himself offered contributions for the first numbers.

The plan of this „*Foreign Quarterly Review*“ was talked over by Gillies and his friends. Gillies took to it at once and conferred with De Quincey, Sir William Hamilton and others about the subject. All gave him full authority to announce their names as intending contributors.

It was out of question to find a publisher in Edinburgh, the only Mr. Blackwood being already highly engaged with his review. Gillies therefore had to go to London to begin negotiations for the publishing of the new review, the idea of which was an entirely original and novel one for England.

¹⁾ III. 142 ff.

Gillies' trip to London was successful. He was received very favourably by different editors and made a contract with the house of Treuttel and Wurtz, Treuttel jr. and Richter for the publishing of the „Foreign Quarterly Review“. He was to receive 600 £ per annum, out of which however he had to pay the contributors.

The question of Gillies' editorship of the „Foreign Quarterly Review“ is a disputed one, Max Blatt leaves it open.

Lockhart ¹⁾, Eberty ²⁾, Lippincott ³⁾, Francis Watt ⁴⁾, Allibone's Dictionary of Authors ⁵⁾, R. E. Prothero ⁶⁾, all of them mention Gillies as the first editor of the „Foreign Quarterly Review“.

Tedder ⁷⁾ and the catalogue of the British Museum mention J. G. Cochrane as the first editor. This opinion is strongly supported by John Macray in his „Notes and Queries“ ⁸⁾, out of which Max Blatt mentions the following passage:

„It was originally intended that Mr. R. P. Gillies should be „the editor of the F. Q. R.; but other occupations having pre-
„vented that gentleman from devoting adequate time and atten-
„tion to the arduous duties connected with a new periodical
„from which so much was expected, Mr. Cochrane . . . stepped
„forward and saved the infant periodical from threatened delay
„and difficulty.“

To me Macray's remarks seem highly improbable. Gillies speaks about his editorship with so much certainty ⁹⁾, that, backed by the above mentioned sources and testimonials, he cannot well be doubted. Lockhart's testimonial seems to me especially important. Why should Walter Scott, in those years already so busily engaged, have taken the trouble to write two essays for which he was not remunerated, if not to assist a personal friend who then was in need of help? What reason would he have had, if Cochrane had been the first editor? ¹⁰⁾

The first number had an unexpected success ¹¹⁾. Complimentary articles appeared in the press, not only of the Kingdom, but also on

¹⁾ Life of Scott. 1869. IX, 73.

²⁾ W. Scott, 1853. 649 and 681.

³⁾ Pronouncing Biograph Diction (1886).

⁴⁾ D. N. B. XXI, 369.

⁵⁾ 1897.

⁶⁾ „Byrons letters and journals“ II, 338 foot note.

⁷⁾ D. N. B. XI, 163.

⁸⁾ 1859, 2^a series. VII, 127.

⁹⁾ III. 168, 167, etc.

¹⁰⁾ Was Cochrane perhaps a „strawman“ who gave his name for the enterprise, Gillies preferring to keep in the dark, on account of his creditors who might have taken hold of his annual income?

¹¹⁾ III. 168.

the continent. Gillies had written an opening essay on the contemporary Swedish literature.

During the last year of his stay in Edinburgh there appeared in 12° three volumes of „*German Stories*“, selected from the works of E. T. A. Hoffmann, de la Motte-Fouqué, Pichler, Kruse and others, published by Blackwood.

In 1827, being again greatly troubled by his creditors, Gillies, pressed by his family and his friends resolved to leave Edinburgh and to settle in London, where he hoped to be able to work without being disturbed. Without taking the time to settle their affairs, in a flight like way, the family in September 1827 went on board a ship bound for London, where they settled down in a „dependance“ of Fladong's Hotel, in Mary-le-bone Street.

7. Life in London.

Fladong's Hotel was too expensive for Gillies' reduced means¹⁾. Shortly after the family's arrival they began house hunting, which proved to be a difficult and tiresome task, London at that time being very much crowded. They left a house in Orchard-Street after a month's stay and removed to Upper Seymour-Street West, where they remained for the next twelve months.

Gillies had to interrupt his quiet literary labour by a voyage to Edinburgh. His abrupt departure from Scotland made it now necessary to go back there and settle affairs. Furniture and books were packed up and partly shipped to London, partly stored in Edinburgh. Gillies' mother having died her whole belongings also were to be disposed of.

Gillies paid a short visit to Walter Scott at Abbotsford. He was most kindly received by him and Mr. Lockhart and stayed over night. They talked about the „Foreign Quarterly Review“ and Gillies proposed to Scott to write an article on German chivalry for his magazine²⁾. After having settled his affairs, Gillies returned to London, by steamboat.

The F. Q. R. had made a great sensation in London and perceiving its success, at once competition arose. Under the auspices of Mr. William Fraser³⁾ a new foreign quarterly review appeared and a paper war began between the two rivals. In the course of the years four

¹⁾ III. 168.

²⁾ III. 177.

³⁾ III. 169.

other competitors arose, all of which however the original „Foreign Quarterly Review“ survived¹⁾.

As soon as he was back in London, Gillies resumed his literary labour. He worked hard and shrank back from going into society, not to lose any time. He knew that he entirely depended upon his pen and that any interruption of his work meant serious trouble for himself and his family.

At that period Thomas Campbell was his near neighbour. Though they had entirely different opinions on literary subjects and questions, Campbell often in the evening dropped in, and Gillies saw a good deal of him²⁾.

Gillies' work was highly appreciated. He was an authority in the questions of foreign literature. And he was fully aware of that and perhaps put only too much trust in that. „I think there were not more than three or four authors in all London who could even pretend to much power in that department“, he writes.³⁾

But nevertheless financial troubles began again. We do not see exactly why they came. But it was probably the old story: from early boyhood being accustomed to live in superfluence he could not now give up old habits and probably lived above his income.

In 1828 he took the lease of a house in Connaught Square and removed thither. A loan granted by kind friends enabled him to raise 250 £ which soon were consumed without being able to lessen the money difficulties. Various attempts to raise money were made by him during the following years, but always with little or no success, and when finally he had been able to get money and wanted to pay, his debts had redoubled by the exorbitant law costs and all was to be begun all over again. Writs of execution were threatening him all the time and only the help of friends was able to keep him from a longer stay in the sponging house.

In 1830 he published a novel „*Basil Barrington*“, for which he received two hundred pounds from his publisher, Mr. Colburn. But having waited too long Gillies had to finish it in a great hurry and accordingly the novel had no great literary value.⁴⁾ It is not mentioned in the catalogue of the British Museum.

¹⁾ III. 181.

²⁾ 183 ff.

³⁾ 196.

⁴⁾ III. 213.

The same is to be said of another novel, *O'Hanlon and his Wife*, in which Gillies describes some incidents of General Macdonell's life in London, trying to give an illustration of the absurdity and unjustness of the law of arrest, against which Gillies during the following years wrote numerous publications, all of them anonymous.

The warfare between Gillies and his creditors continued during the next years. They embittered his life and made his family miserable. Often he had to barr and bolt his door so as to get some quietness from the bailiffs and in order to be able to do some literary task work, for which he generally was well paid.¹⁾

The account of all those scenes is a pathetic one. It was a continuous struggle for freedom and often without success.

In 1834 matters wore a more rosy aspect. The F. Q. R. began to be more profitable and Gillies had been able to reduce his debts in London to a very trifling amount. Family illness forced him to remove to Brighton, when an event took place that again threw him back into the darkness of poverty. The house which published the F. Q. R. failed and several promissory notes were in Gillies' hands.

Creditors at once fell down upon Gillies. During his absence in Brighton his town house was ransacked. In vain were Gillies' remonstrations when hurrying to London. His home was broken up, furniture, books and everything taken away. A manuscript of the „*Life of Zacharias Werner*“ and Gillies „*Winter Night's Dream*“ were ruined and irrevocably lost.²⁾

After having resided for some time with his family in a hotel and then in a lodging house, Gillies took a cottage and garden at St. John's wood and continued to work, producing „divers stories, criticisms, and miscellaneous essays for periodical works“, and also his „*Recollections of Sir Walter Scott*“.

In 1836 Gillies was imprisoned for debts for three months and when set free became a contributor to Mr. Beaumont's „*British and Foreign Review*“ and to „*Frazer's Magazine*“.

The next abode of the family was Champion Hill. From there they removed to Peckham Rye near Forest Hill, where they spent a winter. They continued their migrations and came to Brompton, then to Queen's Elm, Chelsea. It is probable that they were turned out of doors everywhere, not being able to pay. For a sum of 20 £ Gillies

¹⁾ III. 235.

²⁾ III. 250.

in 1837 was again arrested at the request of his landlord at Peckham Rye! In prison Gillies again wrote against the law of imprisonment for debts. An article of his appeared in the „British and Foreign Review“ and was attributed to a high legal authority, being much talked about. The chief step Gillies took in that matter was the writing of an argumentative petition which was presented in the house of Lords by the Marquis of Lansdowne, February 1838.¹⁾

In 1840 a committee²⁾ was appointed with the purpose to „inquire once more into the state of debtor and creditor law, especially with a view to the question, whether imprisonment for debt was or was not an evil of such magnitude, attended by so little benefit, that as such it ought to be abolished for ever“. ³⁾ But it was not until 1844 that the law was abolished for ever.⁴⁾

At the end of the year Gillies removed to Burton Street, Burton Crescent, where he remained for a year and a half, writing magazine articles especially. He would not have left Burton Street, had not family illness required a change of air. For that reason a new migration was resolved upon and the family set sail for Boulogne, in the year 1840.

8. Life in Boulogne.

Boulogne was in those times a favourite resort for English residents. Gillies was kindly received everywhere and soon formed a centre of society.

To his income from literary labour was added a small yearly allowance from one of his relations. His wife too had by inheritance some means at her disposal.

Up to the year 1845 everything went well. Gillies had rented the Château Blancpain, a small countryhouse in the neighbouring country. An uncle of his, one of those relations to which he had given the sums through the loss of which he had been obliged to sell his hereditary property, made promises of pecuniary help. Unfortunately he died and his legacies were so that they could not be touched as long as a nearer standing heir should live. In vain were Gillies' efforts to get the money immediately. New law costs were the only result.

¹⁾ III. 260.

²⁾ III. 262.

³⁾ III. 262.

⁴⁾ III. 264.

Gillies had enjoyed unlimited credit in Boulogne in the beginning. That took an end after 1846 and now all the petty financial troubles began again, the migrations from house to house, the next abode always being worse than the one they left. The friend of Walter Scott, the nephew of Lord Gillies, the ci-devant head and centre of a brilliant literary circle was now reduced to such poverty as to take lodgings in the worst parts of the French port, in quarters full of bad air and malaria. And those he found them only by the „good word“ of a friend, who recommended him to the landlord, who finally took them in on condition of payment in advance.

What made matters worse was, that the days of high remuneration for literary work had passed. The new age of railways no longer had money for literature, and though Gillies' magazine articles still were readily accepted and though he always was highly complimented on them, the gain they brought him was meagre.

Illness formed the last link in Gillies' chain of misery. The fevers reigning in the bad quarters where Gillies was obliged to live, took hold of different members of the family, especially of Mrs. Gillies whose life seriously was threatened. Kind friends finally stepped in. Mrs. Gillies recovered and accompanied by her and his son Gillies returned to England, with a financial plan which he wanted to submit to the trustees of his late uncle and which would have accorded him a new life.

9. End of Gillies' life.

The last years of Gillies' life are not more quiet than those just described. His fight against his creditors continued, his financial plan having been rejected in Edinburgh. King's Bench became his abode again and again, once for the lapse of eleven months. During that time his family had to fight their way through life as well as they could. Again and again kind friends stepped in, William Wordsworth being one of those which Gillies mentions with especial gratitude.

The end of Gillies' Memoirs is filled up with the reminiscences of those pathetic struggles. Deeper and deeper Gillies sinks into poverty and misery. The long stay at the prison also affected his health and this prevented him even from doing the literary scrap work which still had been the source of a small income. On days when he felt better he used to retire to a small room in the garret of the prison, called the „dead-room“, where sick prisoners usually were

placed. There his fellow prisoners at least left him undisturbed and there he sometimes continued his literary work.

He never gave it up entirely. New literary plans continually were formed and had he but had his „little tranquil home“ for which he was sighing, they certainly would have been accomplished.

It is characteristic for the earnestness of his endeavours, that amidst all the financial difficulties of Boulogne he had conceived the plan of translating Kant's „Kritik der reinen Vernunft“. He finished the translation in London, did it twice over and made an original glossary to it, beginning at the same time negotiations in order to find a publisher. Everything was on the best way, when he was again imprisoned, which seems to have interrupted these negotiations, which up to the end of his „Memoirs“ no more are mentioned.

In 1851 Gillies published his „*Memoirs of a literary Veteran*“. What became of him after that year I do not know, not having been able yet to find a source for the remaining years of his life. Francis Watt¹⁾ gives as date of Gillies' death the year 1858 and as last place where he had taken his domicile, Kensington.

A brilliantly begun career ending in „mere shadowism“, too great an optimist breaking down in the fight with daily life, for which he had not been well enough prepared: that is, if we resume, Robert Pearse Gillies' life!

¹⁾ D. N. B.

IV. ROBERT PEARSE GILLIES AS MEDIATOR OF GERMAN LITERATURE AND INTELLECT TO ENGLAND ¹⁾

The general opinion attributes all the merit of having reawakened English interest for the German intellectual life to Thomas Carlyle. It cannot be disputed that he for the first time thoroughly studied the German classics, though lately the opinion has been expressed, that he rather prevented the English from appreciating and understanding Goethe, than the contrary ²⁾. But he did not go deeper into the period that followed, into the German Romantic School, which remained totally unknown to the English, until Gillies came forth with his translations and essays about German literature. It was the great object of Gillies' literary efforts to make the English acquainted with those „stores unknown“, which he had looked for from early boyhood and which he finally struck upon in full, after having acquired a thorough knowledge of the German language.

The unhappy circumstances of his domestic life prevented him from continuing to follow „the unbeaten track“. His domestic calamities reduced him to the work of a mere scrap writer and journalist and as the adverse circumstances continued up to the end of his life he never had an opportunity of extricating himself again and Wordsworth's „Rise, Gillies, rise!“ died away without finding its echo.

Max Blatt has written two essays about Gillies' work as a translator ³⁾. He examines there Gillies' work for Blackwood's Magazine and for the „Foreign Quarterly Review“. My following exposure is chiefly based on the result of Blatt's researches which allow us a good general view on Gillies' whole translatory activity.

Its striking feature is Gillies' predilection for the German „Schicksalsdrama“. I have already mentioned, how favourably the so called „German Diablerie“ was received in the circles of the Edinburgh literati. Scott delighted in it and Gillies not less, the boy's imagination already

¹⁾ I am forming this title after W. Streuli: „Thomas Carlyle als Vermittler deutscher Literatur und deutschen Geistes“.

²⁾ Kellner: „Die englische Literatur im Zeitalter der Königin Victoria“, pag. 152.

³⁾ 1. „Modern Language Notes“, Vol. XVII, N° 3, pag. 166 ff. [Baltimore, E. Marshall Elliot.] 2. Dto. Vol. XVIII, N° 3.

having been fed with such literary food. It is therefore not an astonishing fact that Müllner's „Schuld“ made a great impression on him and that, knowing that it would be favourably received, he translated it.

The great success „Guilt“¹⁾ had, encouraged him to proceed with his translatory work. „The 29th of February“²⁾ followed, as well as „King Yngurd“³⁾ and the „Albaneserin“⁴⁾.

Gillies considers the „Yngurd“ to be the greatest and most affecting of Müllner's works. He admires the skilfulness of Müllner's exposition and finds in the work deep poetry and passion. He finds in „Yngurd“ several traits of the character of Napoleon and believes, that Müllner partly tried to portray the great usurpator. Gillies' opinion finds a support in Minor's introduction to the extract of Müllner's works in the „Deutsche National-Literatur“⁵⁾.

Altogether Gillies is strongly overrating Müllner, but in that does not stand alone. The German author's technical ability had also been fascinating his German contemporaries and he earned great triumphs at the theatres of Vienna. It is a good testimony for Gillies' translatory powers that the managers of the two leading London theatres, as I mentioned before, applied to Gillies for adapting „Guilt“ to the English stage, after some extracts of it had been published in Blackwood's Magazine.

Probably through Müllner Gillies' attention had been called to Werner. He studied him even perhaps more carefully than Müllner and is enchanted by his „24th of February“. Since Platen's „Verhängnisvolle Gabel“ we are accustomed to treat the drama of destiny with contempt. But if in any way we are unjust it is with regard to Werner's „24th of February“, though Gillies' high praise, of course, is exaggerated. Gillies was impressed by the well worked out plot:

„The whole tragedy is a chain so curiously wrought, a web so artfully woven, that by leaving out a link or thread, the whole is irreparably injured. Not one speech is superfluous. . . Every speech tells and prepares the reader for what is to follow. As long as the German language lives Werner will be remembered with respect.“

¹⁾ Blackwood, 1819. Nov., N. XXVII, Vol. VI.

²⁾ Dto. January 1820.

³⁾ Dto. July 1820.

⁴⁾ August 1822.

⁵⁾ Bd. 151, pag. 301.

When in 1827 Gillies wrote this criticism of Werner he could not know how the latter would develop himself. Only judging him according to his first dramatic works he believed to perceive a dramatic genius. And in that showed great discriminating power. We know that Goethe also thought highly of Werner's dramatic powers and only dropped him in later years.

About the „Life of Zacharias Werner“, that Gillies wrote, we know nothing. The manuscript was destroyed, as already mentioned, at one of those inbreaks of Gillies' creditors into his London home.

Less favourable is Gillies' opinion about Houwald, Müllner's friend. He translates his „Light Tower“ and gives an extract of it in the *Horae Germanicae* of Blackwood's, in the January-number of 1823.

Gillies finds more praise for Raupach. He translates „Darkness“, which appeared in 1821, in the January number of Blackwood's, in extracts.

A. Klingemann's „Faust“ had appeared in Germany in 1815. In 1823 Gillies translates it. He found that the drama was highly dramatic and that it was „in some respects more truly than Goethe!“

Like most of his country men Gillies did not appreciate Goethe's „Faust“, the depth of which he did not feel. So his comparison of Klingemann's work with Goethe's cannot astonish us. But the appreciation of the dramatic power of the romantic Faustus-drama is not erroneous. Wilhelm Scherer also acknowledges it, though in other respects he thinks very little about it.¹⁾

The opening article of the „Foreign Quarterly Review“ contained a general sketch of the German drama since Lessing. This formed an introduction to an essay on Klingemann's „Ahasver“, which Gillies calls a „psychological curiosity“. He gave the plot, interwoven with translations, as he had done it in the *Horae Germanicae* with other German dramas. Gillies is especially attracted by the romantic milieu of „Ahasver“: „associations of spectral agency, mouldering old castles, interminable forests“, etc.

Up to Gillies' time Heinrich von Kleist was totally unknown in England. Not even his name was known in the literary world. Gillies, who, once he had found the „new source“, kept in close contact with it and remained „au courant“ with the new productions of the German literary market, became acquainted with Kleist's work through Tieck. It is characteristic for Gillies, that he always formed his own opinion about any literary subject, before he wrote about it.

¹⁾ „Geschichte der deutschen Literatur“, 12. Auflage, 1910, pag. 704.

Tieck praised Kleist very much, at the same time putting down the Müllners, Houwalds, Werners.

We know Gillies' predilection for them. Even now he strongly defended his literary favourites against Tieck's attacks, nevertheless acknowledging Kleist's merits. His discriminating power however was not so great, as to put Kleist in the place which he now holds in literature. But how could a foreigner do that, if the German critics seemed to be blindfolded against the genius living among them!

Of Kleist's works Gillies mentioned in his essay on the great German dramatist the „Prince of Homburg“, Kleist's posthumous work. He describes the character of the prince as impatient, irritable, capricious, dreamy and versatile. It is a character that never before had been exhibited on the stage, something entirely new. The monologues and striking scenes are described. The fourth act is unfavourably criticised. About the whole work Gillies says the following:

„Whatever are its merits, Mr. Tieck may rest assured that „compositions of this kind never will pass muster along with „those of Müllner, Houwald, Raupach and other living authors, „whom he is disposed to condemn!“.

Of the „Familie Schroffenstein“ he says, that it is „a dark picture from the Middle Ages, in which is displayed much vigor with a deplorable want of tact and judgement“.

„Catharine of Heilbronn“ contains many beauties, exalting and affecting, but is unequal and defective.

In Gillies opinion the „Michael Kohlhaas“ is Kleist's greatest success. Highly meritorious too is „the Beggar of Locarno“.

Gillies' final judgement of Kleist is, that he was a time poet according to his feelings, but that in many respects he wanted the due accomplishments of art.

Already in 1819 Gillies introduced Grillparzer to the English public by translating the „Ancestress“. The translation formed the base of an essay, probably written by Lockhart and published in „Blackwood's Magazine,¹⁾ in which Grillparzer was very favourably recommended to the English public. The „Ancestress“ is analysed and its chief characters described.²⁾

¹⁾ Dec. 1819, Vol. VI, N. XXXIII.

²⁾ It contains „some of the noblest examples of pure and concentrative imagination to be found in any author or in any language.“ Bl. M. Aug. 1822.

Gillies bestows high praise on „Sappho“¹⁾. He admires its harmonious blank verse, its good conception and delineation of characters and finds in it a rich vein of poetry.

„King Ottokar's prosperity and death“²⁾ gives, according to Gillies, Grillparzer the superiority over Müllner. He believes Grillparzer to have portrayed in Ottokar much of the spirit of Napoleon. He does not agree with everything in the drama and especially criticises the character of Bertha, which is for him „one of those marks of deficient taste from which few German works are altogether exempt.“

In the „Golden Fleece“³⁾, of which Gillies also gives extracts in translation, he admires the character of Medea, which he thinks to be admirably delineated.

Through Gillies Theodor Körner became known in England even before his name reached France⁴⁾. Already in 1820 Gillies published in the „Horae Germanicae“ an essay on „Rosamunde“⁵⁾ and the next year one on „Zriny“. Körner at that time was totally unknown in England and Gillies was the first to bring him before the public. He admires the last scenes of Act III. and IV., the parting of Rosamunde and Henry and the death of the faithful Nesle.

Of „Zriny“⁶⁾ Gillies says that it is a work admirably adapted to the tumultuous spirit of the time in which it plays.

The „Horae Germanicae“ also brought an essay about Uhland, whose „Duke of Suabia“⁷⁾ is analysed and partly translated by Gillies. He is aware of Uhland's rather quiet character. His work is „not wild and irregular, as German dramas and novels generally are“. He finds a merit in the fact, that even after the hero's death the author has contrived to keep up some interest for the action.

Earlier than anybody else in England Gillies studied Grabbe and Heine and brought them before the readers of the „Foreign Quarterly Review“. He recognised their genius and gave a fair appreciation of their work.

Grabbe⁸⁾ is novel and original. He sometimes falls into „extravagancies, into which over-impetuosity and the determination to be

¹⁾ Bl. M. Sept. 1827.

²⁾ Bl. M. Sept. 1827.

³⁾ Bl. M. Aug. 1828.

⁴⁾ V. Rossel: „Relations littéraires entre la France et l'Allemagne“, pag. 216.

⁵⁾ Bl. M. Oct. 1820.

⁶⁾ Bl. M. Febr. 1821.

⁷⁾ Bl. M. Febr. 1827.

⁸⁾ F. Q. R. III. 319.

original have betrayed him“. But this he easily may correct in his next years.

Gillies' opinion about Heine's¹⁾ prose is that it is lively and diverting. „The author may one day make a considerable figure in the world!“ His descriptions of characters are excellent, the sketches very humorous, though his levity of style has given much offence. — This is Gillies' opinion about Heine after having read the author's „Reisebilder“.

Gillies' translations of Hoffmann, Caroline de la Motte-Fouqué, Pichler, Kruse and others are of less value. He of course recognised the genius of Schiller and Goethe, but understood the former better than the latter. He repeatedly wrote about both of them and devoted several of the „Horae Germanicae“ to them. But he does not seem to have studied them more thoroughly. He always had been looking for „unbeaten track“, and the classics did not belong to it. A greater genius than Gillies was to show to the English the way to Schiller and Goethe: Thomas Carlyle.

In the last years of his life Gillies seems to have studied Kant. I mentioned his translation of the work of the great philosopher. Unfortunately till now I was not able to find any trace of it. But Gillies mentions it in his „Memoirs“ with so much certainty, that this seems enough to me to contradict Max Blatt's remark, that Gillies took little interest in writings of critical and philosophical character. Quite the contrary was the case. The student Gillies already was fond of such works. And if this should be the only objection to attribute the „Horae Germanicae“ XVIII (September 1824) and XXI (June 1825) about Lessings „Laocoon“ and Wieland's „Aristippus“ to Gillies, it certainly could be left out as inexact and those two essays then also would be Gillies' work. But a closer study of the question has to be made in order to give an exact statement.

We have seen that in his translatory work Gillies remained true to his maxim, not to walk on the „beaten track“. Always looking for new literary veins he has the great merit to have acquainted his countrymen with German authors whose existence up to Gillies' time was entirely unknown in England, even to the few chosen ones who understood the German language.

Though the representants of the drama of destiny, which for many years formed Gillies' chief object of study, are of minor impor-

¹⁾ F. Q. R. II. 370-71.

tance, these studies led Gillies on, and brought him to discover greater genii like Grillparzer and Kleist, Uhland and Heine.

But even had he not struck upon these, Gillies' personality would be worth to be studied and worth to be remembered as one of those spirits, who, far ahead of their contemporaries, tried during their whole life to unite the spiritual life of different countries, without regard of political or linguistic limits, with the only object to make each one have the benefits of partaking of the results of the other's work. This „international thought“ was a favourite problem of the old Goethe, and in this one instant the obscure Scotch translator and the great German star bear strong resemblances.

It is a pity, that the unhappy circumstances of his domestic life prevented Gillies to go on with his work. It is more than probable that English Literature to-day would mention him together with his more lucky contemporary, with Thomas Carlyle.



SOURCES

- ✓ 1. *„Memoirs of a literary veteran including sketches and anecdotes of the most distinguished literary characters from 1794 to 1849“*, by R. P. Gillies. 3 vol., London, Richard Bentley, 1851.
 - ✓ 2. (R. P. Gillies): *„Recollections of Sir Walter Scott“*, Bart. London, James Fraser, 1837.
 - ✓ 3. Ernst Margraf: *„Einfluß der deutschen Literatur auf die englische am Ende des XVIII. und im ersten Drittel des XIX. Jahrhunderts“*. Leipzig, Diss. 1901.
 4. Gosse & Garnett: *„An illustrated Record of English history of literature“*. 4 vols.
 5. G. Körting: *„Geschichte der englischen Literatur“*. Münster, 1910.
 6. J. G. Lockhart, Esq.: *„Life of Sir Walter Scott, Brt.“* 3rd edition. Edinburgh, 1853.
 7. Francis Bacon: *„Essays“*. New-York, 1883.
 - ✓ 8. Theodor Zeiger: *„Die deutsche Literatur in England am Schlusse des XVIII. und im ersten Viertel des XIX. Jahrhunderts“*, aus dem Aufsatz: *„Beiträge zur Geschichte der deutsch-englischen Literaturbeziehungen“* in *„Studien zur vergleichenden Literaturgeschichte“*, von Max Koch. Bd. I. Berlin, 1901.
 9. Childe Alarique: *„A poet's reverie“*. Edinburgh, 1813.
 10. Blackwood's Magazine: *„April 1817--December 1825“*.
 11. R. P. Gillies: *„German Stories, selected from the works of Hoffmann, de la Motte-Fouqué, Pichler, Kruse and others“*. Edinburgh, 1826.
 12. *„The Edinburgh Annual register“*, 1808. Vol. I, part 2nd.
 13. *„The Poetical Register and Repository of Fugitive Poetry for 1808--1809. I. vol. London, 1812.*
 14. *„Dictionary of National Biography“*.
 - ✓ 15. Max Blatt: *„Contributions to the history of English opinion of German literature“*, in: *Modern languages notes*, vol. XVII and XVIII. Baltimore, 1903.
 16. *„Deutsche National-Literatur“*, Band 151. *„Das Schicksalsdrama“*, herausg. von Minor.
 17. Wilhelm Scherer: *„Geschichte der deutschen Literatur“*, 12. Aufl., 1910.
 18. *„Personal Reminiscences by Constable & Gillies“*, ed. by R. H. Stoddard. New-York, 1876.
-



